LETTERS

ON

Different Subjects,

In Four Volumes;

Amongſt which are interſpers'd the

ADVENTURES

OF

ALPHONSO,

After the Deſtruction of *Liſbon*.

By the Author of *The unfortunate Mother's Advice to her abſent Daughters.*

VOL. II.

LONDON:

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LETTER I.

To Capt. B——

SO well I know your thoughtleſs diſpoſition, my dear friend, that ten thouſand anxious fears alarm my breaſt at the thought of your preſent ſituation. I tremble for the dangerous path you tread, leaſt a purſuit too eager, ſhould leave the cautious ſteps of ſlow-paced reaſon in the rear too far to be your guide; while young deſire, with her deluſive train of flattering hopes, impatient wiſhes, and expected joys, thro' her perſpective magnified to real happineſs, precipi-

tantly leads the warmed imagination on, 'till a retreat becomes impoſſible: Then cool reflection, too late arrived, may point to diſtant reaſon's ſlow advance, and change the viſionary ſcene of fancied bliſs to vain repentance. Revere the council of a long experienced friend; in time be warned to ſhun that threatened danger which you refuſe to own, or will not ſee, now hovering round your heart.

Sincerely would my ſoul rejoice to ſee you joined in wedlock's ſocial band with a deſerving woman, worthy of yourſelf, who, ſuperior to her ſex's follies, would be the reaſonable companion of your more ſerious hours, whoſe fortune was at leaſt an equal ballance to the attendant incongruncy

ency of an increasing family, and whose prudence knew how to regulate that family to your private satisfaction, and consistent with your public character: To these must be added a mild complying temper with a constant sweetness of disposition, productive of uninterrupted harmony: Till you find a woman thus properly qualified for domestic happiness, securely guard your heart from every fond impression. You smile at a precaution deemed so needless to a man, you think, safely arrived to life's prudential path, beyond the reach of being scorched by giddy youth's impetuous fire; and doubly guarded by a fresh remembrance of the ills already known. Alas! from this security proceeds the greatest danger, which

bears your undefended boſom to the arrow's point! On every ſide beſet, however weak each ſeparate attack, 'tis wiſdoms part to keep a ſteady watch, leaſt the united ſtrength of feeble enemies, too much deſpiſed, ſurpriſe the fortreſs. You are now fixing your habitation where the utmoſt caution will be conſtantly neceſſary; the buſy diſpoſition of the medling tribe of female match-makers, unwearied by repeated ſucceſsleſs attempts, are indefatigable in their labours, and will be forever propoſing ſome new ſcheme, and repreſenting advantages in each, which never exiſted but in their own imagination, who are in fact generally incapable of forming any judgment of what is really advantageous, not having penetra-

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tion enough to go deeper than a ſuperficial view. Yet have I already obſerved you to be a little influenced by their perſuaſion; what then may be expected from conſtant opportunities, continually improved? Forgive me, but indeed you are in ſome things too eaſily impreſſed, too apt to imbibe an opinion without giving yourſelf time to examine it ſufficiently; no man judges better when you ſtay to think, but none more likely to act precipitantly; in things of leſſer moment it may be excuſable, but here let *reaſon* rule; give her full power to weigh each circumſtance, to look beyond the preſent moment, and be by *her* determined to a choice that ſhe forever will approve; unbiaſſed by paſſion, ſhe will immediately ſay, that

you can live more agreeably, more genteely, in your preſent ſituation, upon the annual expence of two hundred pounds, than it will be poſſible for you to do upon five, when married, merely on account of the proper figure then abſolutely neceſſary with regard to your profeſſion, excluſive of the farther conſideration of an encreaſing family. Aſk then yourſelf, what fortune a wife muſt bring, not to prove a real injury to your circumſtances, and ſet that down as a point never to be varied from, never at leaſt 'till an encreaſe of your own fortune renders it not ſo material a point. Having found a perſon poſſeſſed of this indiſpenſible requiſite to happineſs, indulge no diſtant thought of the matrimonial union, which is

always

always ſome bias upon the judgment, till you have moſt carefully examined her diſpoſition (by the methods formerly mentioned) ſhould that be defective, fortune, however large, would prove a poor recompence for bartered peace; but if ſhe ſtands the teſt of a minute enquiry, then, nor 'till then, give *love* admittance; a welcome gueſt when thus ſecure that Hymen's torch will blaze with undiminiſhed luſtre. Remember this little monarch of the human heart is ſure of conqueſt if encountered, and never yet was vanquiſhed but by flight. Truſt not to a ſuppoſed prudence that will certainly fail you when her aid becomes moſt needful: Indulge not a growing approbation, which frequent interviews may form, 'till reaſon has, in

every light, juſtly authoriſed this firſt ſtep to paſſion. You are paſt the fooliſh age of catching ſudden fire, 'tis true, but reſt not too ſecure in this; one ſpark imbibed may long unfelt remain, till by accummulated ſtrength it burſts into a blaze and conquers every fruitleſs oppoſition. 'Tis this I dread: once prepoſſeſſed, the judgment is no longer clear, enquiries then are vain, a dazzling miſt confuſes every object, and we ſee through that miſtaken light our wiſhes ſpread.—Do not thus deceive yourſelf.—See, and in time avoid the danger, which, perhaps, may ſhortly be impoſſible. May heaven avert my fears! and make you truly happy.

Excuſe this long epiſtle, which proceeds from the moſt tender friendſhip; on this ſubject I have ſeldom an opportunity of ſpeaking to you; but exclufive of that reaſon, ſhould have choſe to commit my ſentiments on it to paper, in hopes, that they may dwell longer on your memory. Adieu! Read my letter with the attention due to the tender anxiety, and the kind intention of an affectionate friend.

LETTER II.

To Mrs. G——.

THE impatience you expreſs to hear again from me, my dear madam; would not have ſuffered any thing

thing leſs than a buſineſs of eſſential conſequence to make me defer writing to you for two poſts; but when I tell you that my time, ſince the receipt of your laſt, has been wholly taken up in the reconciling a miſunderſtanding between Mr. B—— and his lady, which was on the point of occaſioning a ſeparation between them, I know you will approve of my devoting every moment to ſo good an office.

What, ſay you, could have produced ſuch a ſerious quarrel between two perſons ſo lately united, and ſo fond of each other? An incident as trifling in itſelf as it was ſerious in its effects. The meeting Lady Ann —— at the houſe of Sir T. S——s. This

viſit

viſit was not very agreeable to Mrs. B——, who had conſented to paſs a few weeks there at the requeſt of her huſband. The ſight of a lady he had once admired raiſed a thouſand unjuſt apprehenſions in her breaſt; ſhe inſtantly concluded the meeting had been concerted, concealed her ſentiments, and determined to watch them: a few incidents, merely accidental, confirming her ſuſpicions, ſhe reſolved in return to give her huſband all the pain ſhe now felt the paſſion of jealouſy capable of inſpiring. My Lord F—— ſeemed a proper perſon for the purpoſe; ſhe immediately grew ſo particular with him as to give Mr. B—— the utmoſt uneaſineſs; in vain were all his remonſtrances, ſhe enjoyed his vexation, and carried on the

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appearance of an intrigue ſo far, that he ſeriouſly reſolved on a ſeparation from a wife who no longer appeared worthy of his ſincere attachment.—This was beyond her expectations; ſhe ſtill loved her huſband tenderly; never had any intention of really injuring him; the thought of a final ſeparation was inſupportable; and all her reſentment gave way, in a moment, to that affection, which had only been ſuſpended by it, yet pride would not ſubmit to thoſe acknowledgments which only could produce a reconciliation, as ſhe believed *him* to be the aggreſſor. In the height of diſtreſs ſhe wrote me this account, and begged my aſſiſtance: I ſet out immediately, —took the firſt opportunity of talking the matter over with Mr. B——, who heard

heard with aſtoniſhment the ſuſpicion entertained of Lady Ann ——, and convinced me beyond a doubt that it was entirely without foundation. Thus from a miſtake, which a plain queſtion might in a moment have rectified, an almoſt irreconcilable diſſention had aroſe; nor do I believe the matter would ever have been amicably adjuſted, had not a diſcovery that Lady Anne had been privately married to Sir William —— effectually convinced Mrs. B—— of the injuſtice of her ſuſpicions; ſhe was grieved beyond expreſſion at the thought of having, in conſequence of a falſe opinion, given the ſtrongeſt appearances of an intrigue with my Lord F——, merely to raiſe a painful ſuſpicion in her huſband's breaſt, without conſidering how

how much her own character ſuffered at the ſame time. Such a ſtain on his wife's reputation wounded Mr. B—— in the tendereſt part, his pride was ſeverely hurt, and notwithſtanding his belief of her innocence, he thought his honour injured by the appearance of her infidelity.

The matter is at laſt however happily accommodated; her juſt ſenſe of the paſt error, and generous concern for having given, by that, the ſharpeſt miſery to a man for whom her heart really feels all the eſteem and affection that his good qualities, and tender attachment to her, ſo juſtly deſerve; has produced a voluntary reſolution to quit all thoſe diverſions he has no taſte for; and conform her

own

own inclination to his love of retirement; in conſequence of which, they are now gone, at her requeſt, to reſide wholly in the country. This will be as advantageous to herſelf, as it is agreeable to him; ſhe is far from being weak, has an excellent natural capacity, capable of great improvements; theſe have been entirely neglected; a polite behaviour, with a taſte for dreſs and gaiety are all ſhe has hitherto learnt. Her mind is a rich ſoil, which for want of cultivation is over-run with weeds, that not having yet taken any deep root, will, by the care of ſo good an huſbandman, be entirely eradicated, and their place ſupplied by uſeful and ornamental plants. I ſo well know the care and attention, that will with pleaſure be given to this office,

fice, that I make no doubt of ſeeing her, in a few years, excel as much in underſtanding, as ſhe now does in beauty.

Mr. B—— is ſo highly delighted with this proſpect, that not the leaſt diſagreeable trace remains of the accident by which it was produced, nor has any thing through life ever afforded him a happineſs equal to what he now enjoys from this fortunate change in his wife's diſpoſition, and the pleaſing hopes he has built on it.

It may in general be remarked, I believe, that the firſt material diſſention between married people, who really eſteem and love each other, thus ariſes from one ſide miſtaking the

the motive of the others conduct in ſome particular inſtance; and, on that miſtake, acting extremely wrong by way of retaliating a ſuppoſed injury; often has this error been carried to an irreparable length, and given a mortal wound to the peace of each: this proceeds from the want of that perfect mutual openneſs which ought to ſubſiſt in the matrimonial union.

Marriage can never be a happy ſtate without an unreſerved communication of all the ſentiments of the heart. Two perſons, whoſe intereſts are ſo inſeparably connected, ſhould have, in effect, but one mind. I do not mean by this to infer an impoſſibility, that their opinions ſhould be always exactly the ſame; but, that

their real thoughts on every ſubject ſhould be ſpoken as freely as they riſe; and that all debates, in matters where they happen to think differently, ſhould be only ſuch as every prudent man muſt have with himſelf, previous to any weighty determination; the arguments on both ſides of the queſtion impartially ſtated and conſidered with that coolneſs, temper, and attention, neceſſary to the forming proper reſolutions; by this means the ſtrongeſt reaſons would unavoidably prevail, and conſequently but one opinion remain to direct, their mutual conduct with perfect harmony.

It may be objected, that there are many people who never reaſon on any ſubject, and are governed wholly by caprice

caprice and whim; this charge perhaps may fall heavieſt on the ladies; but the folly of weak minds can never ſurely be urged as an argument againſt the prudent conduct of the ſenſible part of mankind, who can only here be meant; amongſt *them*, was this method conſtantly purſued, great would be the encreaſe of happineſs; and the ſeparation, or diſagreement of perſons once united by this ſocial band, become as much a novelty as their perfect unanimity is at preſent.

Where the want of this open communication of every ſentiment of the heart has produced doubts or ſuſpicions, nothing can be more ill-judged than an alteration of behaviour in con-

ſequence of mere ſuppoſition of any kind; and had Mrs. B—— conſidered that, the giving the appearance of an intrigue was to all intents and purpoſes the ſame with regard to her husband, family, and her character in the world, as the real commencement of a criminal amour; far from reſting ſatisfied with the conſciouſneſs of unbroken fidelity, ſhe would have trembled at the thought of fixing an indelible blot on her own reputation. Often has a haſty ſtep of this kind, in the early part of life, withered every blooming hope of conjugal felicity, produced unalterable diſſention, and entailed diſgrace upon an innocent family.

Happy

Happy is it for my young friend, that ſhe has fortunately eſcaped this fatal conſequence of her imprudence; and ſtill more happy, that the juſt ſenſibility of her error has produced ſo laudable a reſolution; in which I know you will equally rejoice with me.

This ſubject has ſo totally occupied my thoughts, that it has carried me beyond my intention; and I have not time to commence any other to night, but will by the next poſt reſume that of your moſt friendly enquiry.

Adieu, my dear madam; let your opinion ever do juſtice to the unalterable affection of

Your friend, &c.

LETTER III.

To the ſame.

IN purſuance of my promiſe, my dear friend, I ſeize the firſt moment of this day to gratify your impatience, by a continuation of the ſubject, which has been accidentally interrupted.

The anecdote of the Arcadian ſcene, which, in anſwer to your queſtion was given out of time, has carried us on ſome years too far, and we muſt go back to where we left off in the preceding letter; for tho' I do not intend to write an exact and circumſtantial

ſtantial hiſtory of every trifling occurrence, yet to avoid confuſion, it will be neceſſary to preſerve ſome ſort of regularity in point of time.

Mrs. M——, as I have already ſaid, was far from leading a recluſe life; ſhe lived much in the world, and thought it more for her daughter's advantage to be always under her own eye, than left at home in a nurſery; for this reaſon, took her into all company, but was never ſo much engaged by any, as not to attend to her every word, and almoſt every look; and devoted her utmoſt care to the rectifying the leaſt appearance of any improper tendency. When alone, ſhe taught her to form ſome judgment of characters, at an age in which others

hardly knew what was meant by the term; pointed out all that was worthy of imitation, made her obſerve the errors which ought to be avoided, and repreſented any in her own conduct in ſo tender, and affectionate a manner, that her daughter always regarded her as an indulgent friend, to whom ſhe ſpoke her ſentiments with the moſt unreſerved freedom, and to whoſe opinion ſhe was ever ready to ſubmit her own.

There was amongſt the number of her admirers, when ſhe was ſcarcely ſixteen, a young gentleman, who, entering thoroughly into the peculiarity of her diſpoſition, took the moſt likely method to engage her affections, by profeſſing the higheſt eſteem for her virtues,

virtues, and the moſt diſintereſted friendſhip in conſequence of it: He ſought all opportunities of converſing with her, but always choſe ſubjects of converſation that would have been equally proper to a male friend, without the leaſt mixture of love, gallantry, or compliments to her perſon: A behaviour ſo exactly adapted to her own favourite ſyſtem, could not fail of attaching her ſtrongly to him, eſpecially as his underſtanding and accompliſhments were of a kind, that would ſufficiently juſtify ſuch an attachment.

Mrs. M——, the conſtant confidant of her moſt ſecret thoughts, was far from finding fault with her ſenſibility of his merit; but, as he was a younger

younger brother, and had little other dependance than a commiſſion in the army, thought it neceſſary to repreſent the impropriety of contracting any engagement with him. To this my young friend replied, that ſhe had never entertained the moſt diſtant thought of marriage, was too happy in her preſent ſituation to venture the hazard of exchanging it, and had no other intention than the continuing ſuch a friendly correſpondence as might properly ſubſiſt with a brother.

A mother, who perfectly knew her diſpoſition, and entered thoroughly into her uncommon turn, (which in reality ſhe was not diſpleaſed with, it being very ſimilar to her own) was entirely ſatisfied by this anſwer, with regard

regard to herſelf, but thought it neceſſary to caution the young gentleman, in time, againſt indulging a growing affection, that might be productive of unhappineſs to himſelf, by giving him to underſtand, that his viſits would not be received as a ſuitor, tho' they were very acceptable as an acquaintance. This was perfectly agreeable to my friends inclination, whoſe regard for him was too ſincere not to feel moſt painfully any apprehenſion of his entertaining hopes, that would entail on himſelf the mortification of a diſappointment.

The good lady took the firſt opportunity of purſuing her intention; when, contrary to her expectation, he begged leave to continue his viſits upon

on thoſe terms which might be permitted; and gave her the moſt ſolemn aſſurance, that he would never attempt to lead a perſon ſo dear to him into an engagement that, in his preſent circumſtances, muſt be ſo diſadvantageous to her.

You will probably think it would have been more prudent in Mrs. M—— to have broke off at once all correſpondence between two young perſons, whom ſhe knew had ſo tender a regard for each other, than to have permitted the continuance of a friendly intimacy, that, according to the opinion of the world, founded on general experience, muſt be liable to cenſure: In her defence may be urged the perfect knowledge of, and certain

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dependance on her daughter's natural diſpoſition, which entirely removed every fear concerning her, and that being upon a foot of friendſhip and confidence with both, ſhe was always of their party, and might ſafely depend on her own penetration to diſcover if the attachment, on either ſide, encreaſed to a degree that could be productive of unhappineſs or miſconduct; nothing leſs than ſuch an apparent probability would have been thought by her a ſufficient reaſon for breaking off an acquaintance or friendſhip, which, as ſuch merely, ſhe was far from diſapproving; ſatisfied that her conſtant preſence ought to be a ſecurity againſt every ill-natured reflection, ſhe had no kind of apprehenſion about the matter.

Senſible

Senſible and clever as this good lady was, and ſincerely as I venerate her memory, in this ſingle inſtance I muſt diſſent from her opinion, being convinced that public reports, though not founded on truth, are of too much conſequence to be treated with indifference: But human judgment at beſt is fallible; and this, I really believe, to be the only point wherein hers erred: Perhaps that appears to me now in a ſtronger light than it would ever have done, had ſhe lived ſome years longer to regulate my friend's conduct, who has ſince ſuffered much by acting in conſequence of this early imbibed opinion, before her judgment was arrived at maturity to direct where it might with ſafety be followed: Had this deficiency been ſupplied by a mother's

ther's experience, and attentive care, nothing might probably have ever happened to give riſe to this reflection.—But to proceed.—For ſome months this intimacy ſubſiſted, with all the appearance of the moſt perfect happineſs; they were inſeparable companions; one was never to be ſeen without the other, and it was generally believed they were on the point of being united by indiſſoluble bands. This opinion Mrs. M—— endeavoured to refute by a contrary declaration, which gained no credit, while her daughter, with perfect indifference, ſaw her lovers every day deſiſt from their addreſſes, on a ſuppoſition of her engagement; and having then no intention to marry, thought herſelf perfectly happy in the acquiſition

of

of that ſort of friend her heart had been always ſet upon the hope of obtaining; every part of the young gentleman's behaviour to her authoriſed this opinion; at length, however, he grew unuſually penſive; Mrs. M——, whoſe obſervation no circumſtance could eſcape, queſtioned him about it; to which he replied, that in ſpight of all his endeavours he now felt the utter impoſſibility of longer maintaining the appearance of a cool friendſhip for her daughter; and aſked whether, in caſe an acceſs of fortune ſhould render him a more ſuitable match, he might not be permitted to make his addreſſes as a lover. The good lady anſwered, there would be then no objection on her part, but he would probably find much difficulty to

to obtain her daughter's conſent to become the wife of a man for whom, as a friend, ſhe had made no ſcruple to confeſs a ſincere regard.

This obſtacle he thought might be ſurmounted by time and importunity; and had reſolved to remove the other, or periſh in the attempt, by endeavouring to ſignalize himſelf in a manner that could not fail of procuring ſuch an encreaſe of rank in the army as would be ſufficient to anſwer the purpoſe. The war, which had ſometime broke out, favoured this intention; and the regiment to which he belonged being ordered for the next embarkation, gave a reaſonable hope of putting it ſoon in practice.

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His perfect knowledge of my friend's heart, and thorough acquaintance with her real ſentiments, made him very deſirous of concealing from her a deſign he knew ſhe would on every account diſapprove; he therefore begged, and obtained of her mother a promiſe of ſecreſy, which was faithfully kept; this knowledge alſo ſecured him from any apprehenſion that her hand would be diſpoſed of to another during his abſence.

When he departed for the regiment, they mutually exchanged vows of eternal friendſhip, and agreed on a conſtant epiſtolary correſpondence.

This

This ſeparation was, I believe, to the full as painful as that of lovers. With the utmoſt impatience ſhe every day expected to hear from him, but was equally aſtoniſhed and grieved at the diſappointment of that expectation. After ſome weeks had thus elapſed in a total ſilence, ſhe deſired leave to write to him for an eclarciſement of ſo unaccountable a behaviour; but uncertain where to direct, propoſed doing it under a feigned name in a periodical paper, and in a ſtile that would be underſtood only by himſelf. Mrs. M——, who gueſſed the reaſon of his ſilence, did not abſolutely oppoſe her intention, but, willing to ſpare him a needleſs pain, found means to delay it till ſhe heard he was gone abroad, and conſequently

there would be little probability of his ſeeing the letter.

This poetical expoſtulation I have no copy of, nor do I recollect the month in which it was printed, therefore cannot refer you to it, but as I know you will deſire to ſee the contents, ſhall try to repeat them by memory. This juvenal epiſtle may ſerve to give a juſt idea of her ſentiments at that time, but if you expect any thing extraordinary, you will be diſappointed; it is well enough for a girl of ſixteen, which is all that can be ſaid of it.

To Marcus.

Alas, how little of ourſelves we know!
How ſmall a part perform of what we owe!

We

We promiſe friendſhip, and perhaps intend,
But ſoon forget the promiſe and the friend.

Can you, whom late I thought by far the beſt
Of human race, prove worthleſs as the reſt?
Say, why did you eternal friendſhip ſwear,
Or why invoke the gracious gods to hear
Thoſe vows you meant to break?——Deceiv'd
by you,
I muſt conclude that men are never true;
Their ſolemn falſhoods unregarded hear,
And all connexion with the ſex forſwear.
Why are they given, ye gods, ſuperior ſenſe!
Or why endow'd with ſoft'ning eloquence!
The pow'rs you give they uſe but to betray,
While reaſon's ſcepter yeilds to paſſion's ſway.

But you, oh! Marcus, once I thought had been
By much above the common race of men;
Unſkill'd in arts, unmeaning to deceive,
I thought you was, and did your vows believe;
Nor were thoſe vows to love, but friendſhip
made;
Think on your promiſe, and yourſelf upbraid.
What god-like virtues in your boſom meet!
You want but conſtancy to be compleat:

A mind ſo noble, and a form ſo fair,
Pity one thought deformed ſhould harbour there.

Reflect a moment, aſk your conſcious breaſt
By whom theſe lines were wrote, to whom addreſſed,
And 'twill inform you, for you can't but ſee
They were to you deſign'd, and wrote by me.

CONSTANTIA.

It was near three months after their ſeparation before my young friend obtained her mother's permiſſion to publiſh this epiſtle. As ſhe could not doubt either of his ſeeing it, or diſcovering the author, ſhe entertained an almoſt certain expectation of receiving ſome ſort of anſwer to her letter, and flattered herſelf with the hope of his being able to remove thoſe ſuſpicions of inſincerity which

ſo

ſo unaccountable a ſilence had given riſe to. The indulgence of this expectation ſerved only to redouble the mortification of diſappointment when every periodical paper was examined without affording the anſwer ſo ardently deſired. A few months put a period to all hopes of this kind, but as many years removed not the painful impreſſion it left on her mind.

Adieu, my dear friend; I cannot add more to night, than that I am, with unalterable eſteem, ever moſt affectionately

Your's, &c.

LETTER IV.

To Miſs LOUISA ——.

A Mind like your's, my dear Louiſa, formed to enjoy the happineſs of others, will be delighted with the recital of an event that has juſt happened in my neighbourhood, and is at preſent the general ſubject of converſation amongſt us; I cannot therefore defer giving you the pleaſure you will receive from the knowledge of this new inſtance of my worthy friend Mrs. M——'s uncommon benevolence, who, in one of her evening walks, attended only by a ſervant, heard at ſome diſtance in the coppice ad-

adjoining to her garden, the ſound of plaintive voices, that ſeemed expreſſive of extreme diſtreſs. She haſtened, through a winding path, nearer to the place from whence it came, and diſcovered, by the opening of the branches, a beautiful girl, who appeared to be about the age of eighteen, bathed in tears, her head reclined on the breaſt of a youth, in whoſe amiable countenance was pictured the moſt poignant anguiſh. From their converſation ſhe ſoon learnt, that by ſome unexpected misfortune, they were not only on the point of being ſeparated forever, but the unhappy girl compelled to give her hand to a man ſhe hated, on the day that had been appointed to beſtow it on *him* ſhe loved: Theſe peculiar circumſtances

ſtances ſeem'd to heighten the diſtreſs of parting; in faultering accents ſhe lamented the impoſſibility of diſcharging her duty to the beſt of parents, but by this ſacrifice of her own happineſs: With an unreſerved acknowledgment of the tendereſt affection, was join'd a declared reſolution to break off all acquaintance with *him*, from the moment ſhe became the wife of another; and this on a principle of virtue that ſhrunk with horror from the bare appearance of vice.

The youth ſaw not the neceſſity of ſo painful a determination, and, with all the eloquence he was maſter of, labour'd to mitigate the cruel ſentence; but was at laſt overcome by the force of her arguments urged with

with amazing firmneſs, and promiſed to quit the country immediately after her marriage, to reſide with an uncle about fifty miles diſtant. A thouſand innocent and mutual endearments concluded the parting ſcene, and they each took a different path out of the wood. Mrs. M——, aſtoniſh'd at a generoſity of ſentiment ſo unuſual amongſt perſons in the ſtation theſe appear'd to be, order'd her ſervant to follow the girl to find out her name and place of abode, who ſoon learnt that ſhe was the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, her name then, Letitia Willis, which was to be changed in a few days by a marriage with Thomas Rich, ſon to a farmer that was Mrs. M——'s tenant.

The

The good lady, already intereſted in the behalf of the diſtreſſed Lovers, rejoiced at the laſt circumſtance, which promiſed an opportunity of being ſerviceable to them; went the next morning to ſee the girl; found her buſied in the offices of the dairy, and was ſurpriſed at the uncommon neatneſs, not only of her perſon, but of every thing in the houſe, of which Letitia was the chief manager, her mother having been long infirm. She ſoon found a pretence to take her aſide, and enquired into the cauſe of the melancholy that over-ſpread her countenance, with the kindeſt offer of aſſiſtance. Oh! madam, anſwer'd the girl, I know your goodneſs, but death only can relieve my misfortune,

I muſt part forever from a young man I love dearer than my life, and indeed he deſerves it, for every body ſpeaks well of him, and am forced to marry one that is croſs, proud, ill-natur'd, and has nobody's good word, or—ſee my father ruin'd!—Here grief for a while ſuppreſſed her voice that was drowned in a copious flow of tears; when ſufficiently recovered to reſume the ſubject, ſhe complied with the good lady's requeſt, by informing her of all the circumſtances of her unfortunate ſituation; more out of gratitude for the tender concern expreſſed, than from any hope of finding redreſs to thoſe evils ſhe thought irremediable.

Not

Not to exceed the compaſs of a letter, I muſt paſs over many intereſting particulars of this little hiſtory, and ſhall only tell you, that this young couple had been intended for each other from their infancy; the youth was the only ſon of a near relation to the girl's mother (whoſe name was Smith) he dying when the boy was but eight years old, left him to the care of her father, with an injunction to complete the marriage at a proper time, who then took the lad home to his own houſe, where growing up with his daughter, they became mutually fond of each other, and the next week had been appointed for the celebration of their nuptials; when an unexpected misfortune put a final period to all their hopes of happineſs.

About

About two years ago her father, moved by the diſtreſs of an old acquaintance, was bound for the payment of three hundred pounds to farmer Rich; this acquaintance died ſoon after inſolvent; the debt of conſequence came upon the ſurety; but the two farmers having always lived upon the moſt amicable terms, Willis was under no apprehenſions from ſuch a creditor, who voluntarily promiſed to give him his own time for the payment.

It happened that young Rich had long been an unſucceſsful ſuitor to Letitia; and having a much larger fortune than his rival, had often, by the moſt advantageous offers, in vain endeavoured to ſupplant him. When the

the day was fixed for her marriage, and their companions invited to the ceremony, unable to bear the thought of loſing his miſtreſs, he perſuaded *his* father to try if *her's* could not be prevailed with to ſet aſide the intended marriage in favour of himſelf. Willis, embarraſſed by the unexpected propoſal, and afraid of incenſing his creditor by a poſitive refuſal, referred him to his daughter; who, unmoved by all that could work upon female vanity, rejected his offers in ſo reſolute a manner, as to convince the old man of the impoſſibility of changing her affections, which he repreſented in the ſtrongeſt terms to his ſon, and urged every argument to make him relinquiſh the hope of poſſeſſing the perſon of a girl, whoſe heart was unalterably

alterably pre-engaged.—His endeavours were fruitleſs; the young man, violent in his paſſion, ſwore not to out-live the diſappointment of his hopes, and, by this means, frightened his father into an ungenerous reſolution to force her, if poſſible, to a compliance, by offering to give up the bond to Willis if ſhe married his ſon, but to inſiſt on the payment before ſhe became the wife of another. This threw the whole family into the utmoſt diſtreſs.—To pay the debt was not in their power; the father therefore muſt go to a jail,—or the daughter comply.—The good old man preferred the firſt.—The daughter's filial affection and duty prevailed over every other conſideration, and ſhe reſolved rather to ſacrifice herſelf, than ſee her

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father condemned to the miſeries of a priſon;—this reſolution produced the parting ſcene already related.

Now, madam, ſaid the girl, having finiſhed her ſtory, what redreſs can I find?—My intended huſband has but one hundred pounds in the world, and all my father's ſtock would ſcarce make up the remainder; or ſuppoſe it would, what could we do ſtarving together.—I am forced therefore to comply, and have no relief.

Mrs. M—— heard her ſtory with the compaſſion it muſt naturally inſpire.—Compoſe yourſelf, my dear girl, ſaid ſhe, we may yet find a way to make you as happy as you deſerve. Then returned with her to the houſe,

talked

talked the matter over with the old people, who were diſtreſſed beyond meaſure at the ſeparation of the lovers, joined to the apprehenſion of the miſerable life their daughter would have with a man ſhe could never endure, and who in reality had not one good quality to recommend him: From them ſhe heard the whole ſtory, with many additional diſtreſſing circumſtances. A thouſand intereſting anecdotes, in this little hiſtory, muſt be deferred till we meet: Suffice it at preſent only to ſay, that Mrs. M—— left them with an aſſurance that ſhe would take the matter upon herſelf, and comforted them with the expectation that all things would ſoon be ſettled to their ſatisfaction.

Now, my dear Louiſa, follow this worthy woman through the ſequel; hear her, with the utmoſt propriety, repreſenting to Rich the inhumanity of making uſe of the power in his hands to diſtreſs a neighbour, and ruin the peace of his family; and enjoining him, on pain of being diſmiſſed from the farm, to reſtrain his ſon from any future attempt to prevent the marriage, or diſturb the quiet of the young couple. See her diſcharge the debt, and preſent the cancelled bond to young Smith, with orders to complete his happineſs by the poſſeſſion of his intended bride, and the day after their marriage to bring his wife to her. Figure to yourſelf the countenance of the amiable youth, more expreſſive than language, of a heart ſo over-

overwhelmed with joy and gratitude, as to leave him ſcarce the power of thanking his benefactreſs.

The happy couple were joined, all the village rejoiced in their good fortune, and the diſappointment of young Rich, who was univerſally diſliked. The father and mother came with them to return their united acknowledgments to this excellent lady. She told them, that the good were always the care of heaven; 'twas there alone their gratitude was due, ſhe only having been made the inſtrument to reward a daughter's filial piety; and to complete their felicity, put them immediately into a ſmall farm of her own at an eaſy rent, on which there was a pretty houſe neatly furniſhed.

In vain ſhould I attempt to deſcribe the pleaſure that was on this occaſion either given or received; you will conceive much better than I could paint it, and the feelings of your own heart will convince you, that the ſatisfaction of the perſon who conferred the benefit, exceeded that of thoſe who received it; as in her breaſt was accumulated the ſeparate joy of every individual, whoſe miſery ſhe had exchanged for almoſt perfect happineſs. Their thanks were returned with all the warmth that ruſtic language could expreſs; while their looks beſpoke a gratitude that no words can deſcribe.

The diffuſive happineſs ſpread thro' the neighbouring villages, and univerſal

verſal ſeemed the joy, while the echoing hills reſounded with *her praiſe*, whoſe bounty had beſtowed the bleſſing.

Your generous boſom, my dear Louiſa, will partake the raptures of this deſerving family, and know too well by experience the delightful ſenſations reſulting from benevolent actions, not to form a judgment of thoſe produced by this ſight in the breaſt of Mrs. M——. This good lady, with not more than ſix hundred pounds a year, has every thing elegantly neat about her, and is continually doing acts of charity and benevolence that would be thought great in a perſon poſſeſſed of as many thouſands; the children of the neighbouring poor are taught to

read, write, &c. at her expence, and inſtructed in their duty by the curate of the pariſh, to whom ſhe gives a ſalary of twenty pounds a year for this purpoſe. The ſick are ſupplied with all their neceſſities require, and ſupported till they are capable of re-commencing their work. Innumerable inſtances could I relate of this lady's bounty, but none more beneficial to ſociety than that of lending one, two, and ſometimes three hundred pounds, without intereſt, to induſtrious young perſons, who, without ſuch aſſiſtance, could never have been able to ſet forwards in buſineſs. I dare ſay there are not leſs than twenty tradeſmen, now in flouriſhing circumſtances, who owe their riſe to theſe loans, and I have heard her ſay ſhe never loſt but

one

one ſum ſo lent, all the reſt having thankfully repaid her when able.—How god-like are thoſe diſpoſitions that thus employ the goods of fortune in diffuſing happineſs wide as their influence can extend; and how much ſuperior muſt be the enjoyment reſulting from acts of this nature, to that which all the pomp of dreſs, equipage, and public ſhew, can afford.

Few, very few, my dear girl, are the inſtances of this kind.—How much more happy would the world be, if ſuch an example was followed by thoſe whoſe larger fortunes might enable them to be much more extenſively uſeful to ſociety! And how inexcuſably culpable are they who either waſte in idle extravagancy, or hoard

hoard in ruſty coffers, what, properly applied, might make thouſands happy.

Not having time to write to you the laſt poſt, I did not ſend the few pages of the hiſtory, which were then tranſlated, ſhall hereafter, as you deſire, tranſmit the ſheets as they are finiſhed, tho' unaccompanied by a letter; but I believe that will ſeldom happen; becauſe, however unneceſſary may be the repetition of a truth you are already convinced of, I am pleaſed with embracing every opportunity of ſubſcribing myſelf

Your moſt faithful
and affectionate friend, &c.

The

The ADVENTURES of ALPHONSO, continued.

I Have been pleaſed with my charge, becauſe you have been ever ſo attentive to my admonitions that, till this laſt ſevereſt trial of your conſtancy, I have never found it neceſſary to call in the aſſiſtance of a foreign aid. —This requires an explanation, as you cannot at preſent comprehend my meaning; but you muſt have patience while I proceed regularly in the information I am permitted to give you; by which means you will be acquainted with thoſe ſecret ſprings that influence the conduct of mankind, but are beyond the reach of human penetration.

tration. For this ſingular indulgence you are indebted to the peculiar favour of that Supreme Being from whom we both derive our exiſtence; not owing to any capricious partiality, inconſiſtent with the perfection of his nature, but, as a reward to the uncommon integrity of your own heart. I ſpeak, Alphonſo, from undeniable certainty, having been intimately conſcious of your every thought.

The order of beings to which I belong are permitted, under certain limitations, to indulge their benevolent affections in the ſervice and aſſiſtance of the human race, ſo far only as to influence their minds, without infringing their agency. Soon as an infant is born into your world, one of

us

us obtain leave to be his guardian, and from that moment, to the hour of his diſſolution, we never abandon him, unleſs he becomes incorrigibly depraved, and by continually rejecting our admonitions, renders it impoſſible for us to be any farther ſerviceable; in that caſe we reſign our charge, and receive permiſſion to chooſe another; but wretched is the man who is thus given up, for the moment we leave him, one of thoſe malevolent beings, who delight in the deſtruction of mankind, becomes his conſtant attendant.

This race of miſcreants, fallen themſelves from a ſtate of purity, are unwearied in their fruitleſs endeavour totally to ſubvert the order of the univerſe,

verſe, by introducing vice, confuſion, and rebellion, to the utmoſt extent of their ability. In the rank of being they were originally our equals, nor have we now any power over them, but what ariſes from the ſuperiority of virtue, which keeps them at ſo awful a diſtance, that not the moſt intrepid of them will dare approach the man, who, by yeilding to our influence, is protected from their malice; yet are they ever throwing alurements in his way, and inceſſantly watching an opportunity to ſeduce him. We are never unmindful of their attempts, or wanting in vigilance to counteract their deſigns.

I ſee, continued he looking ſtedfaſtly on me, the concluſions you have

have drawn from this relation; but you are miſtaken in ſuppoſing we exert any compulſive power over the will of man; the freedom of his actions is unreſtrained even by the Deity; our office extends no farther than to collect and impreſs on his mind, thoſe motives that ought to determine his choice, and he is then at full liberty, either to receive or reject our influence.

You would now aſk, why all men do not equally profit from that aſſiſtance we offer to each in an equal degree; and from whence proceeds that apparent propenſity to ill in the nature of ſome, which is diſcoverable even from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, and reigns thro' every

ſtage

ſtage of future life, to render them in a manner incapable of receiving any virtuous impreſſions, and averſe to every wiſe and prudent admonition. This queſtion I am not permitted to anſwer you, and the reaſon is, that it is impoſſible to give an intelligible and ſatisfactory anſwer to ſuch an enquiry, without a previous information with regard to the original deſign in the creation of man, and explaining the primary cauſe of ſo ſtrange a compound of ſpirit and matter in the ſame being: Two things in their nature ſo oppoſite, ſo inconſiſtent with each other, that nothing leſs than the Almighty mind could have formed an idea of ſuch a poſſible union.

When

When the creative word ſpoke your planet into being, the deſign of its formation was to us imparted; and notwithſtanding the very imperfect conception which even the higheſt of the celeſtial inhabitants could form of the ſtupendous plan, that imperfect knowledge afforded ſufficient matter to raiſe our aſtoniſhment at the amazing power, and encreaſe our love and adoration of the inconceivable benevolence of the Supreme Exiſtence, which was here unexpectedly diſplayed in ſo extraordinary a manner that never had been equalled; and, as we yet believe, never can be exceeded.—But this cannot be brought to the level of your preſent comprehenſion, nor indeed, whilſt your immortal part is ſo intimately connected

with matter, would ſuch a knowledge, could it be communicated, be ſerviceable to you; but, on the contrary, might be productive of many pernicious conſequences.

Reſt ſatisfied, therefore, with the aſſurance I give you that, whatever apparent difference there may be in the diſpoſitions of mankind, all feel at firſt with equal force the impreſſions we make on their minds; all are equally capable of attending to, and obeying our admonitions, and all will finally acknowledge that not the power but the will alone was wanting to obey, and own, beyond the grave, the juſtice of the irrevocable doom. ——What fits your knowledge I am permitted to impart to you, receive with

with gratitude the peculiar favour, ſuſpend every idle curioſity, and let it be ſufficient that you will no longer remain ignorant of any thing, that it can be either uſeful or convenient for you to know.

As it would be very difficult, continued he, to deſcribe, and ſtill more ſo to make you comprehend any deſcription of the manner in which we diſcharge our friendly offices to mankind, of that I am to give you occular demonſtration; but you are not now capable of receiving it, we muſt wait yet a little, and during that time I ſhall recal to your remembrance ſome incidents of your paſt life, wherein you will be ſenſible of

the advantage my influence has been to you.

When, after the death of your father, many ſchemes for improving the ſmall pittance his extravagance had left you were propoſed; being young and unexperienced in affairs of this kind, a deference for your uncle's judgment led you to fix on that which had the ſanction of his approbation; in purſuance of this you was to have embarked in a few days, with all your effects, on board a Dutch veſſel which then lay in the harbour, and the next day was fixed for drawing up an agreement between you and the captain of it. I foreſaw what muſt have been the fatal effects of

ſuch a voyage, and reſolved, if poſſible, to prevent it.

Recall to your imagination the anxiety and doubt wherein you paſſed the night after having acquieſced in your uncle's determination, and the uneaſineſs you felt at the thought of ſigning the propoſed agreement on the enſuing day; yet not being able to account for your own averſion to a plan, which you could not make any ſolid objection to the prudential part of, you determined to conquer what appeared to be only a whimſical diſlike, and ſet out in the morning with a determined reſolution to fulfil the engagement. I redoubled my efforts; but, in proportion to the ſtrength of my impreſſion, you ex-

erted the force of your reſolution to ſuppreſs it, on a miſtaken opinion which it exceeded my permiſſion to rectify; I began to deſpair of ſucceſs, and was on the point of calling a foreign aid; when at that inſtant, Don Antonio's guardian power ſummon'd my aſſiſtance.

Our method of communication is inſtantaneous; we ſee, in a moment, the utility of each others deſigns, and at once comprehend all the means of effecting them: I preſented Antonio to your imagination, and excited an inclination to conſult his opinion on your preſent anxiety; you went directly to his houſe, and found him not a little diſcompoſed by the ingratitude of a young man, on whom

he

he had conferred a long ſeries of unmerited favours:——The particulars of this ſtory, which has never reached your knowledge, I will relate to you as a proof of the advantages which reſult to mankind from ſuch an attention to the impreſſions we make on their minds, as may lead them to a willing compliance with our admonitions; and of thoſe irreparable evils which, on the contrary, muſt accrue to themſelves from obliging us, by a conſtant rejection of our offered ſervice, to leave them to the direction of thoſe malevolent beings who delight in their deſtruction.

About twenty years before the period I am ſpeaking of, an intimate friend of Don Antonio's, named Or-

lando, was, by a ſucceſſion of unavoidable misfortunes, from the moſt affluent circumſtances, reduced to the loweſt degree of indigence and want. He concealed his diſtreſſes to the laſt moment, when his rapacious creditors ſeized on all his effects; and, not ſatisfied with that, ſecured his perſon for thoſe debts which it was not in his power to diſcharge. Don Antonio was at this time gone to reſide for a few months at Cadiz; but, having long ſuſpected that Orlando's affairs were in a declining ſituation, though he could never draw the confeſſion from him, had taken the neceſſary precaution to have the earlieſt intelligence conveyed to him if any ſudden diſtreſs ſhould, in the mean time, happen to his friend. The news of his misfortune

tune was no ſooner brought than he flew to his aſſiſtance, paid all the debts that Orlando's effects were inſufficient to diſcharge, and brought him, with his ſon Franciſco, about nine years of age, and an infant daughter, to his houſe at Cadiz. Here Antonio endeavoured, by every poſſible method, to diſſipate the grief of his unhappy friend, whoſe grateful heart, pained with the ſenſe of an obligation that it could never be in his power to repay, and oppreſſed with ſorrow for the recent loſs of a wife he had moſt tenderly loved, ſunk under the weight of anguiſh, and gave way to an imbecility of mind, that in a few months put a period to his life; his lateſt breath recommended the helpleſs orphans, he was on the point of

leaving

leaving, to the care of Antonio, who, after paying the laſt offices of friendſhip to the deceaſed father, adopted the children, educated them as his own, and as ſoon as the girl became marriageable, gave her a fortune ſuitable to her birth, and married her to a wealthy merchant, with whom ſhe now lives happily.

The young Franciſco had maſters of every kind provided for him; he had a quick and lively capacity, and ſo univerſal a genius that he made an equal and amazing progreſs in every branch of ſcience. Having finiſhed his ſtudies at the age of eighteen, Antonio made him clerk to himſelf; by a cloſe application to the buſineſs of his office, he ſoon became ſo expert

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in it that his maſter committed the whole management of his affairs to him, and allowed him an unuſual ſalary for tranſacting them.

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LET-

LETTER V.

To Mr. ——.

HAPPY as it always makes me, my dear friend, to hear of your corporeal eaſe and improving health, I received ſtill more ſatisfaction from the account this day brought me of the evident increaſe of that philoſophic diſpoſition of mind, which cannot fail of producing, when poſſeſſed in its utmoſt extent, perfect and unalterable happineſs in this and every other ſtate of exiſtence: The variety of unavoidably diſagreeable incidents in human life make it very difficult to preſerve that equanimity of temper, which

which is neceſſary to that end, yet the greater proficiency we make in it, the nearer we approach to true felicity, and I congratulate you on the great progreſs you have made.

The abſence of thoſe who are dear to me I always feel the moſt ſeverely of all ills, excepting only their miſconduct; the latter, I hope, you will not give me reaſon to lament, and the former will probably never be long or often.

I believe one great part of our happineſs beyond the grave will ariſe from the utter impoſſibility of being again ſeparated from thoſe who are dear to us; and this opinion is founded on my having always felt the abſence of thoſe

thoſe I love productive of more pain than could be produced by almoſt any other cauſe. Though it is to be ſupported with decency, calmneſs, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity when known to be not only proper, but unavoidable; yet one muſt be abſolutely inſenſible as the unfeeling Eugenio to find a poſſibility of being truly happy in ſuch a ſituation. In ballancing the account, I believe my ſufferings, from an uncommon lively ſenſation, have been through life much more frequent than my enjoyments; yet for the world would I not exchange with thoſe who are incapable of feeling either in the extreme, and travel through their whole tedious journey to the grave, unconſcious of, and incapable of taſting

more

more than the dull eaſe reſulting from a kind of negative happineſs;—unenvied ſtate of inſipidity! Be it my better lot rather to know alternately the ſharpeſt pangs of the moſt poignant anguiſh, and the tranſporting pleaſures of unbounded felicity, than thus to dream away the lagging hours of life in one dead calm of joyleſs inſenſibility, and perfectly alive to ſcarcely any thing but thoſe corporeal ſenſations, which either of pain, or pleaſure, are beneath the regard of a rational mind. I believe, my dear friend, you are in this of my opinion, and would not have choſe to be freed from the pain of ſeparation, at the expence of abating, in any degree, that inexpreſſible pleaſure with which we

ſhall

ſhall, I hope, in few days, meet each other.

The account you give of Roſſano diſpleaſes me much; ſuch a conduct muſt be productive of innumerable inconveniencies, to ſay no worſe, to himſelf. This inſtability in him proceeds not from a defective judgment that wavers in its determinations, but from an unfortunate indolence, which renders the exertion and activity of mind, abſolutely neceſſary to carry any plan ſteadily into execution, almoſt inſupportably irkſome. It would not methinks be very improper to call his a neutral diſpoſition, which inclines not either to virtue or vice with ſufficient ſtrength to animate an invariable

table purſuit of the one, but may be drawn alternately to each by adding ſtrength to the oppoſition on the contrary ſide.

If a man of this temper happens to be virtuous, it is owing more to a happy concurrence of circumſtances, than to his own reſolution. Hitherto the chances have been againſt him, and to that, his faults may be chiefly imputed; but if we both paſs the winter together, I ſhall endeavour to turn the ſcale, and make the difficulty of giving an after account more troubleſome than the oppoſition to a preſent indulgence. He now wants reſolution to reſiſt the temptations that ſurround him, but I hope to make the taſk of excuſing that want

of reſolution more painful, than the exertion of it can be, and by that means make no doubt of carrying the point; he has a thouſand good qualities, and 'tis worth much pains to ſave him from ruin.

I have been fatigued to-day by the neceſſity of receiving formal viſits on my arrival here, which you know to me is the moſt diſagreeable and tireſome way of waſting time, you will not therefore wonder that I ſhould be in too ſtupid a humour to write any thing that will give you pleaſure, excepting only the repeated aſſurance (excuſe my vanity) that I am with the moſt ſincere affection ever

Your's, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

To Mrs. P——.

In anſwer to Letter VII. in the Firſt Volume.

MADAM,

SO deſirous am I to ſhew how happy your anſwer to my letter has made me, that without the preparation which is neceſſary to anſwer your epiſtles, I take up the pen, agreeing entirely with you, that delay with perfection is inferior to readineſs with imperfection in the offices of friendſhip.

Before I proceed to the anſwer of your letter, I muſt tell you that I am highly delighted with the change of ſcene; and my pleaſures in retirement are inexpreſſible.

The mind that is fired with the ſtudy of nature, that adores wiſdom when it perceives it, is in raptures with real beauty whenever it offers itſelf, and has a taſte to diſcover it in rural objects, muſt find true enjoyment, when in the grove of nature. When the ſun riſes, the ſilver hoar whitens all the graſs, and the blackbird chaunts his matin hymn, I take my morning walk; the ſerenity this ſcene produces in my mind you may better conceive than I deſcribe.

The

The day paſſes tolerably well, but the evening again is delightful. The other night the ſcene was ſo fine that I found the old paſſion for poetry recur; and though it is almoſt as abſurd in me, to ſhew you my pieces as it was for the poets of the Dunciad to make offerings at Olympus, I muſt write a few lines;

The evening bluſhes crimſon'd all the Weſt,
And o'er the northern ſky ſoft fleecy clouds
More ſmooth than velvet, and in dye more bright
Than purple ting'd at Phœnice, waving ſail'd:
The modeſt moon, a world of chryſtal light
With ſilver ſeas, and rocks of jet emboſs'd
Through liquid æther held her even courſe,

Enough—I ſee you are tired. Horace long ago remarked of ſingers, what all the world has of poets, that it is with difficulty you perſuade them

to begin, but ſcarcely poſſible to make them leave off. I will not however draw on myſelf the latter remark.

Your approbation of the young man gives me much pleaſure, as it ſatisfies me that I have not been miſtaken in him. It is commonly ſaid, that we are blind to the faults of our friends, but I have long been convinced of the falſehood of that aſſertion; and am certain that both their virtues and vices are magnified by the friend's eye.

I have been wiſhing much for your letter, which I fooliſhly packed up with ſome papers, that are not yet come, therefore cannot regularly anſwer your objections, however as my memory

memory preſents them to me, I ſhall attempt it.

Your firſt material argument in favour of innate ideas is—The great difference that may be obſerved in the diſpoſitions of children of the ſame age, educated under the ſame parents, and in the ſame manner; one ſhall be witty, a ſecond ſagacious, and a third ſilly; now can any one doubt ſay you, but that theſe were prediſpoſitions originally ſtamped on the ſoul. Firſt, What do we mean by prediſpoſition? A certain inclination that leads us to prefer one thing to another without a previous compariſon of the two. On what does this inclination depend? You'll ſay, on a greater fear or a greater love of

one object than another. This implies compariſon, therefore it cannot be prediſpoſition; nor can we conceive a greater deſire for, or proneneſs to one object, without an opinion of that object's being more deſirable, and conſequently the effect of compariſon: But allowing that there were natural averſions and fondneſſes without compariſon, which it is ſcarcely poſſible to conceive, on what would theſe depend? Not on innate ideas, but on the pleaſure impreſs'd on the ſenſes being particularly great; or the uneaſineſs remarkably ſtrong: Now the organs of ſenſe are corporeal, and the whole may at laſt depend on ſome ſubtle change in their organization. We may conceive man to be formed of a ſentient, a ſenſible,

and

and a moving ſyſtem: Let us call the firſt the ſoul, the ſecond the nerves, and the third the muſcles: Now as we know that from the different modes of union of the ſenſible and moving ſyſtems, the variety of temperaments or conſtitutions are form'd, which modes of union are not anatomically, but phyſically proved; ſo from the different modes of union of the ſentient and ſenſible ſyſtems the different mental diſpoſitions may ariſe.

Is it poſſible to ſuppoſe that He who hung the worlds of the univerſe in ſo wonderful a manner that millions revolve round millions without impeding each others motion, or that a Being who in this our planet has

ſhewn

ſhewn ſuch innumerable and inconteſtible evidences of a ſupream goodneſs and benevolence, would create the minds of men with different degrees of ability, yet expect from all the ſame conduct; and offer to all the ſame rewards and puniſhments; ſuch a concluſion muſt be falſe, as juſtice is as eſſential to the Deity as exiſtence; for my part I believe that all minds were originally formed with the ſame powers; and that, as I ſaid before, all the diverſities are owing to the ſame cauſe that occaſions the continually varying ſtripes of tulips; varieties depending on the arrangement of matter.

So nicely is that ætherial ſomething, called ſoul, or mind, interwoven with the

the body, ſo exceedingly ſubtle is this union of mind and matter, that it has been among phyſiologiſts a diſputed point where the ſoul is particularly ſeated; ſome aſſerting that the head was its ſole reſidence, others the ſtomach; now if a diſpute can be raiſed about the ſeat of the ſoul in the human body, we muſt acknowledge that its connection with it is of the moſt ſubtle kind; and, conſequently, that variations in the machine muſt vary the mode of union, and by varying the material part, occaſion a difference in the ſenſes, and by altering the ſenſes, one claſs of ideas ſtrike more particularly than an other; if one ſet of ideas are conveyed more readily, and impreſſed more ſtrongly than another, the memory will be

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more particularly fraught with ſuch; and, if ſo, the aſſociation of ideas will be chiefly of that kind; if a rotine of the ſame claſs of ideas are continually circulating through the mind, the reflection of them will be of the ſame nature; of courſe from hence flows peculiarity of diſpoſition.

You will probably aſk, Are not theſe changes in the organization of the ſenſes viſible to the anatomiſt?—No, madam. The two greateſt affections of the mind, idiotiſm and madneſs, very frequently ſhew no remarkable variation of the ſenſible parts, yet nobody will dream of aſſerting that theſe mental diſeaſes are not the effect of corporeal changes. I think it may be proved even in that in-

inſtance which ſeems moſt to contradict this doctrine (the madneſs from uneaſineſs) that the corporeal parts are diſeaſed, as we particularly find the nervous ſyſtem in theſe unfortunate perſons ſo varied in its ſenſibility, that they require double dozes of medicines to act on them. But on the ſubject of madneſs, either medically or phyſically, much may be ſaid, as I think little has been written well on that ſubject. Now if we allow, which we certainly muſt, that the want of judgment, as in idiotiſm; and the falſe collection of ideas, as in madneſs, may be the conſequence of bodily diſeaſes; we muſt alſo allow, that all the ſhades between ſagacity and idiotiſm, between genius and madneſs, may be ſo likewiſe; he

who

who denies this, might as well deny the truth of a mathematical demonſtration.

The next argument you bring to ſupport your opinion is, that we have many ideas which could not be derived from matter, as time, ſpace, &c. now I muſt ſay with Mr. Locke, that we have no ideas of either, but what we receive from matter: Firſt, Are not our ideas of time entirely produced from a ſucceſſion of incidents? By theſe we meaſure time. What are theſe incidents? Certain accidents which produce certain ideas that ariſe from matter, and are conveyed to the ſoul by the organs of ſenſe, which are themſelves material. Suppoſe a man to have laid in a trance five days, without

out dreaming, would he have any notion of the time that had elapſed? No, for he has had no ſucceſſion of ideas. There is a certain ſort of madneſs, in which every thing that happened the day before the ſenſes were loſt, for many years afterwards, are, by the perſons imagined to have happened the day before that in which they are ſpeaking; the memory of all preceding facts being retained in regular order, but, from the commencement of the diſeaſe, having loſt the power of regiſtering new ideas, they conſequently have no notions of time. Again; when a perſon, who is capable of receiving ideas as they offer themſelves, and retaining them, is travelling, or amuſing himſelf ſo that every moment brings in a new ſet of ideas, he thinks

thinks the time much longer than he otherwiſe would: This I ſpeak from experience, as I have often remarked that the days appear to be almoſt double their uſual length while on a journey, and this not from being tired; tho' wearineſs is likewiſe an illuſtration of this doctrine; for every idea rivets itſelf, as it were, in the mind, and hangs upon it, when we wiſh a certain time elapſed.

Let us next examine our notions of ſpace. We think it a vaſt extenſive vacuity; by which ſpace or vacuity we imply boundaries, as we have no conception of infinity, an idea reſerved for a future ſtate. How many millions of millions of miles ſoever we conceive ſpace to extend, ſtill to have

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an idea of it, we muſt conceive it to be of a certain ſize; and if of a certain ſize, it muſt be bounded, and the boundary muſt be material; conſequently, if we have any idea of ſpace, that idea muſt be derived from matter, and of courſe theſe your objections to my opinion have no weight.

I ſhould next conſider your hypotheſis, which is ſo pleaſing that I would by no means object to it, if the allowing it did not endanger my own ſyſtem.

Can we imagine that the Deity at preſent interferes with the petty œconomy of our machines? No.—In the beginning he formed them, and gave them laws, on the regular operation

of which, health of body, and, as we have before ſaid, health of mind depends: Now you ſeem to think, that the corporeal incumbrances are intended as puniſhments; if then, in conſequence of age or diſeaſe, a lively and vigorous mind is changed to a melancholy and inſipid one, do you hold it that this was one of the better or worſe fallen angels; if one of the beſt, why did theſe incumbrances fetter his mind? if one of the worſt, why was he in the beginning ſo lively and promiſing? There is now no reſourſe, but to ſay, the diſeaſe was from God; yet, perhaps, it was from eating or drinking too much, or ſome ſuch accident: and can we ſuppoſe that the Deity is continually acting on, and regulating our bodies; ſuch a ſuggeſtion muſt be falſe,

falſe, becauſe was that the caſe, we could have no power over our bodies, and this implies non-agency.

Again, If the Deity was regulating our ſyſtems, why ſhould poor little innocent babes be ſo puniſhed as they frequently are? Theſe are a few of many objections that may be brought. Did I not know that you, with the exertion of half your abilities, would be quite too much for me, I ſhould have been polite, according to the common acceptation of that term, but upon my word you often put me hard to it.

Now, madam, I ſhould attempt to bring other arguments to ſupport my own ſyſtem; I wiſh I had either time or

ability, or you patience to reduce the ſubtle and complex metaphyſical ideas, thro' the road of reflection, down to ſimple ideas; but this would be too great a taſk, and at the ſame time conceited, as it is ſo well done by Mr. Locke; yet as you are not ſatisfied with him, I think I may venture to give you two illuſtrations drawn from the growth of ſtates, and the progreſſion of manners.

On a compariſon of all thoſe ſtates that, in the beginning, were not favoured with divine aſſiſtance, we find them firſt mere hunters, and their country a hunting field: Their paſſions direct their conduct: They eat, drink, and live in common: Next the weaker, being abuſed by the ſtronger, enliſt

enliſt themſelves under their banners, and little bodies of them unite, form certain laws for their conduct, and as many little ſtates ariſe. Theſe contend with each other, and partly from conqueſt, and partly from policy, ſeveral unite, and ſubmitting to each other, at laſt form a kingdom. Obligation, not ſelf-knowledge acquired, not innate ideas, gradually produced in their empty minds prudence, policy, and refinement. If God had not inſtructed the happy inhabitants of paradiſe himſelf, they certainly would have been little better than idiots.

The other argument for acquired ideas is, the prevalence of certain turns of temper in mankind at a certain period; ſome attribute this to emulation,

others to imitation, but it ſeems entirely owing to the progreſſion of manners.

Ideas are brought into the mind by ſome circumſtances relative to ſuch ideas, or that uſed to accompany them; thus, when we ſpeak of fruit, its chief quality, flavour, immediately recurs; or in the other inſtance, when we ſee a place where ſome remarkable incident occurred, the remembrance of ſuch incident returns: Now, if a vaſt variety of circumſtances, each of which has its train of ideas, happen at nearly the ſame time, ſomewhat of the ſame prevalence of ſentiment, or at leaſt of the ſame method of reaſoning, will in all people be produced: We have two good inſtances of this at Athens in the the-

theatrical poets; when the democracy prevailed, and Cleon exerciſed his unlimited power, in conſequence of which every Athenian was bold and enterpriſing, the licentious and ſtriking Ariſtophanes wrote; when Athens again became compoſed and happy, the gentle and elegant Menander graced the pen.

From Egypt I ſhall take another inſtance; their religion being much of the ſymbolic kind, the ſame method of communicating opinions prevailed in other things; hence, in the arts and ſciences, in which they are ſaid to excel all other nations, they delivered no juſt account to future ages, wanting ſimple deſcription. I have often with pleaſure remarked the gradual

improvement of the human mind, and the different kinds of ſtudy purſued as manners improved: Obſerve in the great empire that their geniuſes were in this order:

1ſt, Deſcriptive Poets,	Orpheus, Linus.
2d, Epic Poets,	Homer, Xenophanes.
3d, Natural Philoſophers,	Thales, Anaximander, Democritus.
4th, Moral Philoſophers,	Epictetus, Plato, Socrates.
5th, Mathematicians,	Archimedes, Euclid.
6th, Hiſtorians,	Xenophon, Herodotus, &c.

I have omitted many that ſtill further confirm this order, and others that deviate from it. Now obſerve the courſe of the human mind; when a language is in its infancy, every word muſt have many meanings, and therefore the firſt grand effort of genius, muſt be towards poetry, which, at firſt, wanting contrivance, muſt be the bare deſcriptive, not epic; hence firſt Linus, Orpheus, &c. As natural ſagacity encreaſes with the ſtock of facts, contrivance, and a hiſtory of human life, dwelling particularly on thoſe actions which make the greateſt figure in recital, with the aſſiſtance of emphatic language, muſt be ſoon expected; for this nothing more was neceſſary than fine taſte, natural judgment, and chaſte obſervation; all

theſe qualities joining in Homer, from the progreſſion of manners, this was the period for the Iliad, &c.

As the poet always ſelects thoſe ideas which are moſt univerſal, and at the ſame time moſt ſtriking, and wanders round them to diſcover a ſide where he may add a ſcientific epithet, or ſhew that he dives more intimately into the ſubject than others: As the poet is proud of forſaking his natural deſcription, and introducing a philoſophic rhapſody, a ſubtle query, or an ingenious gueſs; philoſophy naturally follows poetry, and of all philoſophy, firſt the philoſophy of nature; hence Democritus, Thales, and Anaximander next appeared.

When

When we enquire minutely into the grand operations of nature, we find that there are many difficulties to be ſolved, that human reaſon cannot effect, and the notion of a God immediately ſtrikes us; we are to expect then that the nature of the human mind, and of the Deity would next be ſtudied, and a ſyſtem of moral and religious philoſophy be attempted; this was the time then for a Socratic ſchool to ariſe.

Diſputes in philoſophy muſt always be expected, as, in the metaphyſical parts, we are obliged to build our ſyſtems on hypotheſes: Keen and cloſe defences of the oppoſite parties follow, and now all are intent on weighing the arguments brought on each

each ſide, comparing and judging; this neceſſarily leads to an enquiry concerning comparative proportions; at the ſame time elegance and arts encreaſing, we ſhould expect, what at this time was abſolutely wanted, a ſyſtem of proportions and calculations, and Archimedes and Euclid ſhewed this the next prevailing taſte.

Within the later ages in Britain, or rather in Europe, what remarkable inſtances have we ſeen of progreſſion of manners. A Des Cartes, Lord Bacon, and Galileo graced the ſame century; a Newton, a Harvey, a Boyle, and a Reaumure, rendered another century immortal; and the preſent age wants not its glories. I could ſhew in one ſcience, and I dare

ſay

ſay it is ſo in others, that the many are deſerting an old ſyſtem, and all, without knowing it, are coming over into a new doctrine; all, without deſigning it, are on the point of agreeing. And I believe had Socrates lived when Homer did, he would have been an epic poet; had Homer been in Athens when Socrates made ſuch a figure there, he would have taught the Athenians to die; in ſhort, that it is owing to the encreaſing ſtock of foreign ideas, and the gradual improvement in the reaſoning faculties, that we have gradually ſuch ſubtlety in real and ſentimental philoſophy.

If I have not yet ſatisfied you, I wiſh your diſſatisfaction may not proceed from your being tired with reading ſo long

a letter, having, I fear, thro' hurry, been guilty of repetition and error, that may darken my evidences; however, if ſtill you think my arguments are not ſufficiently ſtrong, I ſhall be proud of being your convert, but remember, I ſhall not pay one compliment to your ſex, without I find I have no other way left of ſubmitting with a good grace.

I am,
Madam,
Your moſt obliged ſervant, &c.

LET-

LETTER VII.

To Mrs. G——.

KNowing your heart, my dear, incapable of flattery, I impute the compliment you pay to my young friend's verſes to that partiality which growing friendſhip is apt to inſpire. This was, I believe, one of her firſt attempts towards poetry, and as ſuch may be paſſable, tho' it bears the characteriſtics of the age in which it was written.

Not having the leaſt ſuſpicion that Marcus had quitted the kingdom, ſhe concluded he muſt have ſeen her letter,

ter, nor could poſſibly be at a loſs to gueſs by whom it was written, and thought it ſo contemptuous a treatment not to return any anſwer to it, that ſhe no longer looked on him as worthy of her affectionate friendſhip, was ſincerely grieved for the loſs of a friend who had long been near her heart, yet pride and reſentment ſo far got the better, as to carry it off without any appearance of concern; her mother was the only perſon who ſaw that it was far from ſitting eaſy on her mind, yet thought it better to keep the promiſe given him, and let the preſent opinion prevail, than to give her a more ſerious cauſe of grief by the knowledge of his real ſentiments and conſequent unhappineſs.

At her age it could hardly have been thought poſſible to fix a friendſhip on ſo firm a baſis that no time could ſhake, or even death itſelf deſtroy; yet this was literally here the caſe; his behaviour, in the light it appeared to her, rendered him no longer the proper object of her tender affection; for that could neither be juſtified or kept alive but by a return in kind; yet his ceaſing to have this peculiar merit with regard to herſelf, altered not her opinion of the intrinſic good qualities of his mind; for theſe ſhe preſerved an equal eſteem, and ſtill retains it for his memory, though it is now more than twenty years ſince an empty name was all that remained of him on earth, for he lived not to return to England. May not this,

my dear, be allowed a proof of the eſſential difference there is between the paſſion which often aſſumes the name of love, and that ſteady attachment which unites one virtuous mind to another, as the counter-part of itſelf; in the former, the perſon and the ſex are principally conſidered, in the latter, neither are regarded; the *caſe* appears to have no merit, but as the repoſitory of the jewel it contains; if on the teſt of a cloſe examination, a mind is found to poſſeſs all thoſe valuable qualities that deſerve a perfect friendſhip, what in reality does it ſignify, whether it happens to be cloathed with a handſome, or an ugly, a male, or a female form? Thus far I muſt agree in my friend's opinion, that the happineſs of mankind would

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be greatly encreaſed by the prevalence of theſe refined ſentiments; but as experience proves that it is next to impoſſible for any of the inhabitants of this globe to diveſt themſelves entirely of a particular kind of corporeal ideas, I muſt look on it as a wild gooſe chaſe for any one perſon, who feels the capacity of ſo doing, to ſpend whole years in the ſearch of ſimilar minds, when the chances are a million to one againſt the finding any ſuch; it is for this purſuit alone I condemn her, not for that turn which led to it; for, affected as that may ſeem, it was certainly natural in her. At the time I am now ſpeaking of, when ſhe had as ſtrong and affectionate an attachment to this young gentleman, as her heart was capable of feeling, ſought every

opportunity of converſing with him; and was never ſo happy in any other company, her regard was of ſo different a nature from that which appearances gave a juſt reaſon to ſuppoſe, that ſhe was indefatigable in her endeavours to bring about an advantageous match for him, with a young lady of immenſe fortune; and I believe would have ſucceeded, had it not been declined on his part, in the diſtant hope indulged of one day uniting himſelf to her; but he knew Miſs M—— too well to aſſign this reaſon; and ſhe was much hurt at not being able to prevail with him to take a ſtep apparently ſo much for his intereſt; that, ſhe here evidently preferred even to the pleaſure of his ſociety, which by this means muſt have been wholly loſt to herſelf.

Long

Long after his deceaſe ſhe heard from his ſiſter his real ſentiments and deſign; who ſaid, that the doubt of ſucceeding to his wiſh in the intended expedition (joined to an apprehenſion that the art he had practiſed to conceal his purpoſe, and farther views, might rob the lover of all the affection the friend had enjoyed, by rendering him apparently unworthy of her eſteem) threw him into a deep melancholy, and the incapacity of writing to her in a ſtile ſhe could read with pleaſure, produced the total ſilence that had appeared ſo unaccountable.—This intelligence gave her much concern; but inſtead of drawing from it thoſe natural and obvious concluſions which would have ſhewn the folly of perſiſting in a chymerical ſyſtem, that it was

ſo difficult to reduce to practice, ſhe imputed this unfortunate conſequence wholly to her having been kept ignorant of the change in his ſentiments; and was convinced, that had he been open in the acknowledgment of this alteration, ſhe could have found arguments to have brought him back to her own opinion, which, by this method of falſe reaſoning, remained unſhaken by an inſtance that was ſo well calculated to prove its fallacy.

I have ſingled out this little anecdote, amongſt many of the ſame kind, to ſerve as a caricature of that turn before deſcribed; and have been ſo particular in the relation to ſhew you, that thoſe who knew her beſt, and were moſt deſirous of obtaining her

eſteem

eſteem, thought a conformity to her peculiar ſentiments neceſſary to that purpoſe. You will no doubt think it moſt probable that this gentleman hoped, from the beginning, to make ſuch a progreſs in her affections, as to bring her by degrees over to his opinion; admitting that to be the caſe, his having never ventured to give the moſt diſtant hint of ſuch a deſign to herſelf, but, on the contrary, been always moſt careful to avoid raiſing even a ſuſpicion of his diſſenting from her ſyſtem, muſt be allowed a ſufficient proof that there was no inſincerity, or affectation, in her profeſſions or conduct, it being next to impoſſible to have carried on either, for ſo many months, undiſcovered by the penetrating eye of a very ſenſible man,

who, on that ſuſpicion muſt have been conſtantly upon the watch; nor was this the only perſon who thus humoured her inclination, ſome others acted the ſame part for a conſiderable time; but it generally happened, that ſhe had ſcarce began to think herſelf happy in the acquiſition of the diſintereſted friend ſo earneſtly ſought, before the friend unfortunately became a lover, and diſappointed her expectation. The ſevere mortification felt on ſuch occaſions, ſometimes produced a tranſient reſolution to relinquiſh the hope, which was, nevertheleſs, ſoon reſumed, purſued with equal eagerneſs, and followed by equal diſappointment.

The

The amazing contraſt in ſome parts of her character muſt ſeem almoſt incredible to any perſon who knew her leſs intimately than myſelf; the recollection of many inconſiſtencies, which, at the time, paſſed unobſerved, now ſtrike me with ſurpriſe, and none more ſtrongly than her conſtant endeavours to attract the regards of men whom ſhe thoroughly deſpiſed, whoſe converſation was tireſome to her, and with whom ſhe had no ſingle view, but that of giving to the world an appearance that could not but be diſadvantageous to herſelf. Her chief pleaſure was in converſing with people of ſenſe; the adulation of coxcombs ſhe received with contempt, yet never liked to be ſeen in public unattended by a train of ſuch ſuitors, and never

ſcrupled

ſcrupled encouraging the addreſs of any perſon whoſe mind ſhe ſaw was too weak to be capable of any attachment that could be injurious to themſelves; none of theſe were ever diſmiſſed, till they became ſo importunate for a final anſwer, that it was impoſſible to hold them on any longer in uncertainty; and then ſome ground of quarrel was ſought for a pretence to diſcard them: This conduct was extremely prejudicial to her own character; for perſons who have not ſenſe enough to be capable of a ſteady attachment, are often the moſt irritable, and the moſt violent in their reſentments, where the pride happens to be piqued; and ſometimes, on ſuch occaſions, ſhe has experienced that no ſarcaſtical reflection was ſpared that

might

might be prejudicial to her in the world; yet, far from being alarmed at ſo dangerous a conſequence, aſſerted, that where the utmoſt of a malicious and miſchievous deſign went no farther than to propheſy future events, *that* might be regarded as the ſtrongeſt proof of the innocency of her conduct in eſſentials, the only point wherein ſhe could be perſuaded to think her character could be materially injured; nor was it in the power of any arguments to convince her that the indulgence of the wildeſt gaiety de cœur in public company, would caſt a blemiſh on the reputation of a girl whom no man, however provoked, could boaſt the having ever been permitted to ſee in a room alone. The unavoidable effects of ſo pernicious a

tenet

tenet are too obvious to need a comment. Sometimes, by the entreaty of perſons for whom ſhe had the higheſt eſteem, a little reſtraint has been laid on the inclination, but that merely with a view of obliging them, without the leaſt abatement of the diſpoſition to an unbounded indulgence of it.

While Mrs. M——'s health permitted her being always in her daughter's parties of pleaſure, whoſe chearfulneſs gave ſo little embarraſment to the young company, that they never wiſh'd to exclude her, this afforded ſo juſt a ſanction, that not the leaſt reflection was thrown on her character, till the good lady's encreaſing diſeaſe, which confined her to the houſe long before

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it grew very painful, gave an opening to the poiſoned tongues of envy and ill-nature to cenſure the innocent gaiety of my young friend, when ſhe appeared in public unaccompanied by this excellent protectreſs.—But to return from this digreſſion.

The departure of Marcus, and the manner in which Mrs. M—— ſpoke of him, put an entire ſtop to the prevailing opinion of their intended union; freſh propoſals were made; in theſe her mother never went farther than the neceſſary prudential enquiries as to morals and fortune, on which ſhe gave her ſentiments, but left the determination wholly to her daughter. The perſons who addreſſed her in this formal manner were immediately re-

jected,

jected, one only excepted, who was permitted to hope; he was then going the tour of Europe, was not to return under three years, conſequently the event could not take place till that time was expired. The diſtance of the period, and the merit of the young gentleman, ſo far got the better of her diſlike to all ſuch formal propoſals, which ſhe termed making love to her mother, as to prevent an abſolute refuſal; he had all the accompliſhments that ſhe wiſhed in a friend, as ſuch ſhe choſe to retain him and hoped to ſucceed, with this view gave ſome expectations, that if, at his return to England, his addreſſes were paid to herſelf, they might prove ſucceſsful; and in fact, had he taken the hint, and correſponded with her during his abſence,

abſence, tho' at this time ſhe had no ſort of intention to marry, it might ſo have happened; the alteration produced by the death of her mother, occaſioning a change of her reſolution not a quarter of a year before his return, ſhe would then probably have waited for, and united herſelf to him: But he not entering at all into the peculiarity of her diſpoſition, continued paying his addreſſes by a third hand, as the moſt proper method, at which ſhe was ſo much piqued as to haſten the diſpoſal of her hand before his arrival. If I miſtake not, ſhe gave him this reaſon for determining to engage herſelf before his return.

I cannot ſend off my letter without telling you that Mrs. B—— has juſt made

made her huſband a preſent of an heir; this was the only thing wanting to make their happineſs as complete as this ſtate of imperfection will admit. Ever ſince the miſtake that happened at Sir T. S——s's *, they have remained together in the country, where ſhe has been indefatigable in her endeavour to make thoſe improvements in her mind that might render her a rational companion to a man of ſenſe; in which her excellent huſband has with the utmoſt aſſiduity and ſatisfaction aſſiſted: In a letter I have juſt received from him, with the account of the birth of his ſon, he ſays, "I ſhall "now have a little time for my fa- "vourite field diverſions, which have "this winter all given place to the

"more

* See Letter II. of this volume.

" more pleaſing employment of aſſiſt-
" ing Mrs. B——'s ſtudies, who is
" improved beyond my moſt ſanguine
" expectations, and gives me every
" day new cauſe to regard the acci-
" dent, which produced this revolu-
" tion in our domeſtic ſyſtem, as the
" moſt fortunate event of my life; ſhe
" joins with me in deſiring you will,
" as ſoon as poſſible, make it conve-
" nient to yourſelf to be a witneſs
" and partaker of that mutual happi-
" neſs we owe, in great meaſure, to
" your kind mediation." I cannot forbear adding to this a quotation from one of Mrs. B——'s letters, wrote about a fortnight ago. " Should the
" young ſtranger we are every day
" expecting prove a ſon, I ſhall be a
" living confutation of all the argu-

" ments which have been urged to
" prove the impoſſibility of attaining
" perfect happineſs upon earth, for
" that only could add to my preſent
" felicity: I reflect with aſtoniſhment
" on my former fondneſs for diver-
" ſions, for which I have no longer
" any taſte; and, ſince I have been
" made acquainted with the ſuperior
" pleaſures reſulting from rational en-
" tertainments, moſt ſincerely regret
" the time that has been waſted in ſo
" inſignificant a manner."

This account gave me inexpreſſible pleaſure: There is no room to doubt but that ſentiments ſo feelingly deſcribed, will be as permanent as they are juſt; for I am convinced, by repeated obſervation, that nothing more

is

is neceſſary to reclaim a ſenſible woman from purſuits that are below her underſtanding, than to prevail with her to try, by way of experiment, the difference between the tranſient, empty, unſatisfying pleaſures of a life of diſſipation, and the ſubſtantial happineſs reſulting from a ſteady rational conduct; ſo great are the advantages on the ſide of the latter, that once to taſte the difference, is ſufficient to enſure a conſtant preference. To this the early prejudice of an improper education often proves an almoſt unſurmountable obſtacle: Taught from infancy to connect the idea of happineſs with thoſe of dreſs, equipage, company, and a ſucceſſion of trifling amuſements; and that of miſery with thoſe of retirement, reflec-

tion, and reading; this falſe aſſociation of ideas becomes frequently ſo habitual, as to remain inſeparable, even to the end of life; hence it is that we ſometimes ſee ladies, whoſe minds are of that ſuperior claſs, which, properly improved, might qualify them for almoſt any ſphere of action, devote their whole time to employments and purſuits that are ſcarcely excuſable even in the weakeſt. A ſtriking inſtance of this truth may be found in a lady you know, who, with a capacity that would have made a figure in a miniſter of ſtate, a firmneſs and reſolution that would have graced a general, a natural ſweetneſs and complacency of temper, that ſeems formed to make her an agreeable companion, and to promote the happineſs of all around her

her, has ſo perverted the gifts of nature, as to become the peſt of ſociety, the terror and averſion of her acquaintance, the plague of all with whom ſhe is nearly connected, and the object of univerſal diſlike; hated by one ſex, and deſpiſed by the other; wholly owing to her having beſtowed all her attention on her perſon, and the forming ſchemes of gallantry, and totally neglecting every improvement of the mind: With equal ſurpriſe and concern have I ſeen her carry on an improper purſuit for months, with an invariable ſteadineſs that, in a good cauſe, would have done her honour, attending to every collateral circumſtance, without loſing a ſingle opportunity that could be improved to forward the ſucceſs of the point

in view; turning every incident to advantage, in a manner that diſcovered an uncommon penetration and natural abilities, equal to almoſt any undertaking. What pity is it that ſuch ſuperior talents ſhould be ſo groſly miſapplied, and that parts, which might have made her an ornament of the preſent, and a ſhining example to all future ages, ſhould be employed only to prove the deformity of her mind equal to the beauty of her perſon.

I am of opinion that had her huſband attempted to work upon her vanity rather than her reaſon, he might have been more ſucceſsful in his endeavours to reclaim her; it being far leſs difficult, upon the ſame principle, to give a different turn to the

the object of purſuit, than to make a total change of ſentiment and deſign; had the former been effected, the latter would moſt certainly, by ſlow degrees, have inſenſibly followed; but by his aiming at once to enforce a conviction of the advantages of ſuch a change, the horrid idea of miſery, long connected with the notions of retirement, reading, and rural amuſements, made the thought of the country, where a rational ſcheme of life was propoſed, not leſs hateful than that of a priſon, and ſet her ingenuity at work to prevent the poſſibility of making the experiment he ſo earneſtly wiſhed. Is it not ſurpriſing that women, whoſe underſtandings are infinitely above the general ſtandard of the ſex, ſhould not be laudably ambitious of ſhining in a

ſphere wherein thoſe ſuperior talents might be diſplayed to advantage, rather than deſcend to a level with the weakeſt by a conduct equally ridiculous, and a life equally inſignificant with thoſe whoſe half-formed faculties incapacitate them for any thing beyond the purſuit of trifles? The love of praiſe is moſt certainly predominant in the ſex, wiſely interwoven in their compoſition for the moſt valuable purpoſes, and acts in all with leſs variation than almoſt any other propenſity; where a natural imbecility admits not of any mental improvement, the pride of perſon may be eſſentially ſerviceable, and ought by no means to be condemned; but a vanity of this ſort is inexcuſable in all who might boaſt a much ſuperior kind

kind of excellence: Would theſe juſtly conſider beauty as their leaſt perfection, pay to it but a proportionable regard, and give their chief attention to the acquiring that ſort of uſeful knowledge peculiarly adapted to their particular province, wherein ſuperior abilities might be ſet off to the higheſt advantage, what a ſet of ſhining examples ſhould we ſoon have of the moſt valuable character in human life! No ſphere of action is capable of being made more beneficial to ſociety, and conſequently, none can merit higher commendation than that of fulfilling, with conſtant prudence and propriety, the various duties of a wife, a mother, and miſtreſs of a family: Could this once be made the prevailing ambition of the ladies, ſuch is their

in-

fluence, that in leſs than half a century, a total reformation of manners muſt enſue; thus might their natural love of admiration be gratified by immortal praiſe, and glorious annals from age to age preſerve their deathleſs fame! How mortifying is it to obſerve this radient proſpect daily obſcured by the miſt of early prejudice, which, condenſed by habit, and coloured by falſe lights, aſſumes a thouſand gaudy ſhapes, that lead the miſtaken purſuer through a ſucceſſion of follies, but to entail contempt, and end in diſappointment. How beautifully ſtrong, how inimitably juſt is that deſcription of Mr. Pope's!

See how the world its veterans rewards,
A youth of frolicks, an old age of cards;

Fair

Fair to no purpoſe, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend;
A fop their paſſion, and their prize a ſot,
Alive ridiculous, and dead forgot.

Poor as my verſes will appear in the ſame page with his, I muſt attempt to give you the oppoſite character, which I think ought to be ſubjoined.

Behold the contraſt, when the youthful mind
Is to improvement by its choice confin'd,
Knowledge then gain'd, and virtuous habits form'd,
Add charms to beauty: Beauty thus adorn'd,
Retains its conqueſt to the lateſt ſtage;
What young was love, is friendſhip in old age;
Wiſdom their paſſion, happineſs their prize,
They live belov'd, and VIRTUE never dies.

If you are not tired with my rhymes, which is more than poſſible,

ble, I believe you muſt be ſo by the length of my letter, therefore will not detain you longer than to ſubſcribe myſelf with unalterable eſteem,

My dear madam,

Moſt affectionately yours, &c.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

To Miſs Louiſa.

YOUR ſentiments, my dear, are ſo extremely juſt on the duties of the ſtate you are on the point of entering into, that any advice on that head appears unneceſſary to a perſon who thinks ſo juſtly, and whoſe excellent heart never needs more than a conviction of what is right, to enſure the ſteady practice of it. Yet the earneſt manner in which you entreat my thoughts on the ſubject, will not permit me to refuſe giving my opinion, which correſponds exactly with your own, as to the practical duties of

of a wife. My general ſentiments on that head, you have already peruſed in my printed letter of advice to my daughter, in the 57th and ſubſequent pages. If any particular circumſtances occur to you that are there omitted, I ſhall moſt willingly give you my farther ſentiments; tho' I am convinced, from the prudence of your choice, you will never have occaſion to ſtudy more than the two firſt pages.

At preſent I ſhall only point out where I think you err in theory, from not having ſufficiently conſidered the utter impoſſibility of preſerving any one inſtitution in its original purity and perfection, amidſt the total change of manners, cuſtoms, religion, and go-

government, that has been ſince introduced. I entirely agree with you, that marriage is capable of affording the moſt perfect and laſting happineſs we can here enjoy; have never doubted the divine origin of an inſtitution ſo well calculated to promote the felicity of mankind, nor do I ſee that the wiſdom, benevolence, or utility of the original deſign is at all impeached by the great number of miſerable wretches who daily fret beneath the yoke, to which they have inadvertantly ſubmitted; the matrimonial union is, nevertheleſs, the beſt bleſſing of mortality, ordained to compenſate for all the painful ſenſations to which human nature is liable; the reaſon why we ſo ſeldom ſee this truth exemplified in married people is, that

this

this union hardly ever ſubſiſts between thoſe whoſe hands are joined in wedlock.

Expect not, my dear Louiſa, form'd as your heart is, for the enjoyment of the moſt perfect conjugal felicity, to poſſeſs that bleſſing in its utmoſt extent, to which, the education of our youth, and the eſtabliſhed cuſtoms of the world, have now placed almoſt inſuperable bars.

For ſome centuries after the creation, the natural ſimplicity of manners prevailing, this inſtitution very probably remained uncorrupted; nature was then the only law to love, and conſtancy was nature's dictate. The youths and virgins, bred up in perfect

perfect purity of ſentiment, joined promiſcuous in their rural ſports, unconſcious of a thought they need have bluſhed to own; having nothing to conceal, truth ever dwelt upon the lip of each, and every ſentiment was freely uttered; thus their mutual diſpoſitions were early known with certainty: By a ſimilarity of temper and inclination, a band of amity was formed in childhood, which, increaſing with their years, was ripened into love; their hands were then united, and, from that moment, their intereſt and their happineſs were ſo inſeparably connected, that each felt the leaſt infringment of the other's repoſe deſtructive of their own; of conſequence their pleaſures or their pains were mutually enjoyed or ſuffered, the former re-

redoubled, and half the burthen of the latter removed by the tender participation. An infant affection, that took its riſe from an early ſimilitude of diſpoſition, when ratified by the approbation of maturer judgment, was *naturally* increaſed by the poſſeſſion of the beloved object, and as inſeparable from the mind as the principle of ſelf-love; each conſidered the poſſeſſion of the other as the beſt of temporal bleſſings, conſequently not even a tranſient wiſh to change could enter into the heart of either; the reſult of this indiſſoluble band of affection was ſo perfect an unanimity, that the happy pair appeared to be actuated by the ſame mind, and equally incapable of enjoying or ſuffering ſeparately; the growing pledges of their

mutual

mutual love, encreaſed their mutual joys: Idleneſs was unknown to theſe early ages of the world; none thought themſelves above the occupations which God and nature had deſigned them for. The mother's tender care of their infant offspring, ſtill more endeared her to the father's heart; the laborious office to her was doubly recompenſed by his encreaſing fondneſs, and their natural returns of filial affection; ſoon as the ſtage of infancy was paſt, with added pleaſure ſhe beheld her huſband ſucceed to the delightful charge, and with aſſiduous care inſtruct, and form their tender minds to virtue: Thus happy in the ſociety of each other, occupied in the nurture and education of their children, pleaſed with obſerving their daily im-

provements, and entertained by their innocent prattle and childiſh plays, the domeſtic ſcene was replete with every kind of felicity; no vacant hours hung heavy on their hands, for every part of the day had its aſſigned and rational employment; nor could *they* ſeek for foreign joys, who, within the circle of their own family, found all the bleſſings that conſtitute the moſt perfect happineſs of human nature.

This was the matrimonial union, kindly ordained to ſweeten all the ills of life, and heighten ever pleaſure man was formed to enjoy. —But where, Louiſa, is it now to be found? Can our modern marriages boaſt, in any inſtance, a ſimilitude? I fear not: It is not the inſtitution

tuition then we ſhould condemn, the fault lies in our deviation from the original deſign, by which the beſt of human bleſſings has been often converted into the ſevereſt curſe: That it will not prove ſuch to you is moſt certain; on the contrary, there is all the probability imaginable of your being as happy as any two people can expect to be on the preſent ſyſtem. Mr. A—— is ſenſible, good natured, prudent, and fond of you; you will improve by his converſation, while your's will not be unentertaining to him; the ſweetneſs of your diſpoſition will preſerve his temper unruffled; unlike the generality of wives, your firſt principle of action will be to pleaſe your huſband; I ſay the firſt, becauſe I know you will regard this as an eſ-

ſential part of your duty to God. The company he likes will, for that reaſon, be the moſt agreeable to you; the dreſs which pleaſes him beſt, will by you be regarded as the moſt becoming to yourſelf; and ſhould his taſte happen to be ſingular, you will always think his choice a ſufficient and juſtifiable reaſon for your deviating from the prevailing faſhion. Certain am I, that you will make his inclination the guide of all your actions; that his good ſenſe, and amiable diſpoſition, will never ſuffer him to exact a compliance in things he knows to be diſagreeable to you, and that every part of your conduct will be ſuch, as to fix in his breaſt a ſteady friendſhip, founded on an unalterable eſteem of your virtues: This,

my

my dear, is the point which every prudent wife ought alone to aim at; all beyond, as things are now circumſtanced, is mere chimera. You carry your expectations a little too high, and run the hazard of being chagrin'd by diſappointment; your notions are better ſuited to the original inſtitution, which, believe me, no longer exiſts, nor can conſiſtently with the preſent eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, and manners of the world; conſider the nature of that ſort of acquaintance that now generally precedes matrimony, or indeed is thought neceſſary to precede it: Will the modern cuſtoms permit its being of that artleſs, open, and intimate kind, which alone could give the young people any certain knowledge of each others diſpoſition?

The prevailing education lays a continual reſtraint on the freedom of converſation; by degrees we acquire a habit of acting a *part*, that nature wou'd never have dictated; this habit by uſe often ſets ſo eaſy, that the moſt penetrating eye will not diſcover the artifice, and many people find it leſs difficult to appear what they ought to be, than to become really ſuch; the former may be generally ſo well ſuſtained in public, as to paſs upon the world unſuſpected, but cannot poſſibly be kept up thro' all the ſcenes of private life. Hence it is, that when marriage, by creating an intimacy which takes off this reſtraint, diſcovers the miſtake on either ſide, a little ſourneſs of temper, inſenſibly ariſing from the mutual diſappointment,

ment, often, in weak minds, encreaſes into an abſolute diſlike of each other, before they are even conſcious of the original cauſe; too quick a ſenſibility ſometimes produces the ſame effect, where there is no want of underſtanding; to this ſource may be imputed half the miſery we daily ſee ſuſtain'd by thoſe who bear the yoke, that, on the preſent ſyſtem, too frequently galls the wearer. You, my dear Louiſa, have as little intentional artifice in your behaviour as any girl breathing; and may, perhaps, be ready at once to aſſert that you never practice any; yet on a candid examination of your own heart, you will, I dare ſay, acknowledge that your ſilence on a late ſubject of converſation was occaſion'd by an unwillingneſs

willingneſs to diſcover to Mr. A—— that your ſentiments of the matter in diſpute were very different from thoſe he had juſt declared to be his; this ſilence may be term'd a ſpecies of art, by which your real opinion was conceal'd, perhaps, from an apprehenſion that the acknowledgment of it might make a diſadvantageous impreſſion on his mind with regard to your judgment; the ſame motive may probably have influenced him, on ſome other occaſion, to a ſimilar conduct; thus, with all the natural openneſs of diſpoſition, you both may juſtly boaſt, it is more than poſſible that in many inſtances you are yet wholly unknown to each other: Carry this thought on, trace it thro' all the poſſible conſequences, and

you

you will ſee how very uſeful it may prove to be prepared for events, that at preſent appear not at all probable.

Expect to find your huſband's opinion and temper in ſome things different from what you have hitherto thought, and ſhould it ſo happen, you will by that means eſcape the mortification of a diſappointment, and be able, with more eaſe and chearfulneſs, to accommodate yourſelf to what at firſt may be a little diſagreeable.

Your ideas muſt be a good deal lower'd, to bring them to the preſent ſtandard of truth; what may be now very juſtly called a happy marriage, will fall ſhort of your viſionary ſcheme.

That

That you are capable of placing your whole happineſs in the ſociety of Mr. A——, and will be perfectly content to quit all other company and live wholly for him, I can eaſily believe; but that does not, by any means, authoriſe you to expect the ſame from him; he has many acquaintance and connections, which his rank and ſituation oblige him to keep up, bears a public character that ought to be ſuſtained, and you muſt not think yourſelf neglected though engagements, which theſe may make neceſſary, ſhould often occaſion his abſence; beſides this, it muſt be remembered that he is a man of the gay world, habituated to much company, and the faſhionable amuſements, which you are to expect will ſtill

engroſs

engroſs a part of his time; nor ought you to demand any ſacrifices of this kind, as a neceſſary proof of his affection to you.—In ſhort, my dear Louiſa, you muſt take the whole of the preſent ſyſtem of things into the account, and make your plan of future happineſs conſiſtent with that, or it will prove a painful theory which can never be reduced to practice.

Be content to exchange the paſſionate lover for the affectionate huſband, and make it your only point, deſervedly to maintain the firſt place in his eſteem; in which your expectation will never be diſappointed, reſt ſatisfied, if, when alone, he appears pleaſed with your converſation, without

out indulging a wiſh to confine him wholly to it, or even endeavouring to lay the leaſt reſtraint of that ſort on his inclination. This is the rock on which your happineſs is in the greateſt danger of being wrecked, owing to your having adapted your notions of conjugal felicity to what marriage originally was, but never will be again, unleſs mankind ſhould once more return to a ſtate of nature, of which, I believe, there is very little probability. Yet notwithſtanding all the diſadvantages this inſtitution now labours under, it will be found, when two perſons of good ſenſe, good nature, tractible tempers, and an affectionate regard for each other, chance to meet, even yet, the moſt happy ſituation in life.

You

You are peculiarly fortunate in poſſeſſing all theſe qualifications yourſelf, and ſtill more ſo to find them in the perſon to whom you are going to be united. I have no doubt of your fulfilling every part of your duty with the utmoſt propriety; do not loſe the ſatisfaction which would naturally reſult from this, by indulging expectations that muſt neceſſarily be diſappointed.

Your notion of marriage is as enthuſiaſtical as Lady C——'s religious opinions, which you have ſo often endeavoured to reaſon her out of. Contract your views within the bounds of preſent poſſibility, and you will enſure to yourſelf certain felicity.

Your

Your laſt obſervations, on Alphonſo's adventures, are premature; ſuſpend your judgment till you have read to the end; you will then find your objections fully anſwered, and that the ſyſtem he endeavours to eſtabliſh does not, in the leaſt degree, infringe that freedom of agency which alone can render man an accountable being.

Adieu, my dear Louiſa, believe me, with unalterable affection,

Ever your's, &c.

The ADVENTURES of ALPHONSO, continued.

HAD Franciſco been of a virtuous and grateful diſpoſition, he would have thought himſelf inexpreſſibly happy in the favour of ſo excellent a patron; but alas! his heart was void of every noble and generous ſentiment, avarice, cunning, and ingratitude, were its conſtant inhabitants; hitherto theſe had been artfully concealed, by the impenetrable maſk of an invariable hypocriſy, but as ſoon as he believed himſelf become too neceſſary to his benefactor to run any riſk by removing the veil, he no longer kept any guard over his ac-

tions, and gave a looſe to the indulgence of every vicious inclination: Antonio beheld, with inexpreſſible concern, this alteration in the conduct of a youth, of whom he had formed the moſt ſanguine expectations; he regarded him with paternal tenderneſs, and often mildly expoſtulated with him in the terms of an affectionate father, which had no other effect upon the ungrateful heart of Franciſco, than to confirm him in the opinion of his own importance; he grew every day more arrogant and imperious; at length, apprehenſive that his repeated irregularities might entirely eradicate that parental affection Don Antonio had long felt for him, he determined to free himſelf from the fears of future poverty, by the execrable

crable reſolution of poiſoning his patron, and at the ſame time ſecuring to himſelf the poſſeſſion of his immenſe fortune.

To this end he forged a will in the hand of a deceaſed attorney, adding, as witneſſes, the names of two perſons alſo deceaſed, bequeathing to himſelf all the eſtate and effects of which Antonio ſhould die poſſeſſed; to make this more plauſible, the will enjoined a marriage between his ſiſter Artimiſſa and Franciſco, ſubjecting the latter to the payment of ten thouſand pounds if the marriage was declined on his part; if refuſed by her, only to the payment of a trifling annuity for her life; amongſt other pa-

pers of buſineſs this will was ſigned by Antonio without examination. Not having truſted any perſon with his diabolical deſigns, Franciſco imagined himſelf ſecured againſt the poſſibility of detection, and thought nothing more remained but to diſpatch his patron and take an indiſputable poſſeſſion of his eſtate: To this end he prepared poiſon of the moſt ſubtle kind, by a receipt he had formerly obtained from an Indian; how to adminiſter the doſe to Antonio only was now the difficulty; various experiments were made on animals, by which he diſcovered, that blowing a ſmall quantity of this fatal powder up the noſtrils would inſtantly extinguiſh the vital flame; ſnuff therefore was fixed on as the

the moſt proper vehicle. A box exactly ſimilar to Antonio's was procured, in which, with the ſort of ſnuff he uſually took, the deadly portion was ſo artfully mixed as to be imperceptible either to the ſight or ſmell. Soon as the compoſition was prepared, he tried its efficacy upon an old dog, whoſe faithful ſervices had rendered him the favourite of the whole family. The animal, without a ſtruggle, fell breathleſs at his feet, and no marks of violence appearing, his death was ſuppoſed to be natural. Charmed with a ſucceſs that anſwered his moſt ſanguine expectations, he haſtened, elate with joy, to make the fatal exchange.

The tenderneſs with which, notwithſtanding all his miſconduct, the good old man received him, impreſſed a momentary horror at the thought of his own ingratitude. A tranſient remorſe filled his breaſt — he wiſhed it poſſible to obtain poſſeſſion of the eſtate, without the murder of his patron. A ſudden thought aroſe, that it might be practicable to prevail upon Antonio's affection, to give him his ſiſter in marriage, and ſettle his eſtate in reverſion on them, by which ambition and avarice would be gratified, without the hazard of violent meaſures. Intoxicated by this wild imagination, he forgot that the only chance of ſucceeding, in ſuch an attempt, muſt be by the ſoft art of inſinuation, the appearance of filial affection

ſection to his patron, and ſo warm an attachment to Artimiſſa, as to make his happineſs depend on ſuch an union.

Behold here, Alphonſo, a proof of the deplorable ſituation to which that man is reduced, who, by repeatedly and reſolutely rejecting our admonitions, has in a manner forced us to abandon him to thoſe malicious beings who watch the moment of our departure to confirm every vicious habit, ſtrengthen every criminal wiſh into the deſign of perpetration, and urge to the immediate commiſſion of every intended crime; by theſe means endeavouring to haſten his progreſs to a place from whence they, by ſad experience, know the utter impoſſibility

of a return to virtue. Man while an inhabitant of this planet, can never arrive at ſo hardened a pitch of vice as to be entirely free'd from the horrors of a tranſient remorſe; while any hope of his amendment permits the continuance of our attendance, we ſeize thoſe favourable moments and leave no means uneſſayed to improve that tranſient force of conviction into a ſincere repentance, and a juſt abhorrence of guilt; and often ſucceed to our utmoſt wiſh even in the very inſtant intended for the perpetration of ſome long premeditated crime; but when incorrigible depravity has drove us from our charge, theſe ſhort lived impreſſions never produce any other effect than an intended variation of the means to accompliſh

pliſh the propoſed end, and the malevolent ſpirit who has ſucceeded to the poſt we have reluctantly deſerted, intent only on the production of evil, endeavours not to prevent a change of meaſures that, ſo far from obſtructing the main point in view, often proves inſtrumental in accumulating a heavier load of guilt; and indeed, every check of this kind, from reaſon or conſcience, in the purſuit of vice is an aggravation of the crimes of him by whom it is rejected. The malevolent attendant who ſucceeded to that guardian angel by whom Franciſco was abandoned, the moment that all endeavours were found ineffectual to prevent the preparation of the fatal powder for ſo horrid a purpoſe, regarded his preſent irreſolution

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in this light, and fully ſatisfied with the total corruption of his heart, oppoſed not the effects of a conviction that produced not any deſign of reformation, and extended no farther than a deſire of accompliſhing the ſame end, by means leſs dangerous and equally ſure; the leſs of probability there was in this hope, the more forcibly was it encouraged, and the more impetuouſly was he urged to the immediate proſecution of the ill-concerted plan; without a moment's conſideration, he made the inſolent demand as the juſt reward of his ſervices, which were exaggerated with an aſſurance beyond the power of imagination to conceive——Antonio, ſcarce giving credit to his own ears, beheld him with an aſtoniſhment that

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for a few moments ſuſpended the power of ſpeech: At this interval, in purſuance of the ſummons I had received, you entered the room; Franciſco's arm was at that moment ſtretched out to take up Antonio's ſnuff-box, which laid on the table, with an intention to leave the other in its place if the anſwer he was impatiently expecting, proved unfavourable to his wiſhes,——Vexed to be interrupted in ſo critical a moment, he retired with viſible emotion, telling Antonio in a low voice, that he ſhould attend his determination in the evening.——The ſoul of Franciſco, as he ſpoke this ſhort ſentence, was ſo ſtrongly pictured on his countenance, that it redoubled the amazement of the good old man, who now regard-

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ed him with a mixture of terror, pity, and abhorrence, and ſaw him depart with that kind of ſatisfaction which a man feels at being delivered from the purſuit of a wild beaſt, though not unaccompanied by the heart-felt grief of a tender father, at the total depravation of a ſon that was once inexpreſſibly dear to him. Your own extreme anxiety prevented your obſerving the agitation of Antonio's mind, whoſe thoughts were too much occupied by this diſagreeable ſubject to give much attention to any other, till the extreme reluctance you expreſſed to the plan propoſed by your uncle, and the earneſtneſs with which you aſked his advice, awakened in his breaſt thoſe ſentiments of generous concern which every good heart feels

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at ſeeing a worthy youth in ſo diſtreſſing a ſituation; he well knew your diſpoſition and character, and had often pointed you out as a laudable example to Franciſco, the contraſt was now particularly ſtriking; the favourable impreſſion which naturally reſulted from the compariſon, was enforced by the guardian power that watched the good man's ſafety, who inſtantly preſented in a collected view, the danger of keeping a man of Franciſco's abandon'd principles in the poſt he now occupied, and the various advantages that might accrue from your ſupplying his place. Antonio heſitated not to obey the impulſe, or you to accept the propoſals made in conſequence of it; an agreement was inſtantly formed to your

mutual

mutual ſatisfaction; all that has followed to yourſelf you know, nor ſhall I repeat more than a few inſtances to ſhew you the manner in which my attendance has been eminently uſeful to you on different occaſions.—The fate of Franciſco, which you are as yet ignorant of, I ſhall alſo relate to you.

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LETTER IX.

To Mrs. G——.

MUST I, my dear friend, impute the extreme pleaſure you expreſs at the receipt of my letters, to your affection for me, or to the impatience of your curioſity, which outruns my power of gratifying it, tho' every moment unoccupied by neceſſary engagements, is devoted to that employment? The latter moſt certainly has a great ſhare, but the former flatters my vanity too much, not to ſuppoſe it in part the cauſe of the joy which, you ſay, viſibly dances in your eyes, at the ſight of a packet from

from me. Excluſive of theſe two motives, the many blunders, and the miſerable ſcrawl, occaſioned by the haſte I always write in, would make my letters not worth the trouble of picking out their meaning; but giving to theſe the weight I believe they have with you, ſhall take it for granted you will be better pleaſed by the length than the correctneſs of my epiſtles, and ſcribble on as faſt as the pen will go, without looking over a word after it is written, that as many pages may be filled as the time will permit, before the departure of the poſt.

You deſire me not to ſuppreſs a ſingle circumſtance that my memory can recal; the obliging reaſon given

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for this requeſt proves how warmly you are intereſted in every thing relative to my friend, and gives me all the happineſs that muſt reſult from ſuch a diſpoſition in you towards her, which confirms my expectation of ſeeing you ſoon united by the indiſſoluble band of the moſt tender friendſhip; the neceſſary conſequence of a thorough knowledge of each others worth. Reſt aſſured, that no incident of any material conſequence ſhall be omitted; thoſe of a more triffling nature (excepting only ſuch as particularly point the character) muſt be deferred 'till we meet, for it would fill a folio to go through all the peculiarities of the early part of her life, which indeed was ſcarcely, in any inſtance, like that of any other

perſon. This injudicious love of ſingularity was, after the death of her mother, extended even to dreſs, which was always regulated by ſome whim of her own, and never conformable to the reigning faſhion; oddities of this kind paſſing off well enough in her of courſe produced many aukward imitations; with theſe copies ſhe was highly diverted, which, long after the original habit was quitted, remained the objects of juſt ridicule: This ſeems to carry the appearance of a ſpecies of ill-nature, that in reality was ever foreign from her heart; the pleaſure ariſing from hence, was merely of that childiſh kind which one boy feels at having leapt farther, or run faſter, than others of his own age; and only the reſult of that va-

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nity which in a young mind flows from a ſuppoſed conſciouſneſs of ſuperior merit.——Tho' ſecretly pleaſed with obſerving the aukward imitation, ſhe neither pointed out the folly to others, or joined in the laugh it ſometimes produced, but was earneſt in the endeavour to ſilence the public ridicule. This muſt be placed amongſt thoſe inconſiſtencies which ſtamp a peculiar mark on the character: Oppoſite as the diſpoſition which delights in leading weak minds into conſpicuous folly appears, to that which is hurt by hearing ill-natured reflections caſt on any individual, both were ſo equally ſtrong in her, that the ſatisfaction ariſing from the event, was counterpoiſed by its natural conſequences which her

utmoſt power was then exerted to prevent. It was a conſtant maxim with her, even from the earlieſt youth, never to repeat any ill-natured report; her ſentiments on detraction were ſo well known to her acquaintance that whoever wiſhed to be well with her, made their court by putting the moſt favourable conſtruction on all thoſe actions of others, which ſucceſſively happen'd to be the ſubject of general converſation; and I can truly ſay that ſhe never related a circumſtance to the diſadvantage of a ſingle perſon in the world, but when neceſſitated to do it in juſtification of herſelf, or her friends, againſt ſome falſe accuſation. Whether this proceeded from virtue, benevolence, and true good-nature, or

was

was only the reſult of a happy natural temper, the whole tenor of her life will beſt evince——but whatever the motive, the fact remains the ſame.

I had forgot to mention her having a ſtrong tendency to religious enthuſiaſm, which appeared as early as ſuch a turn could ſhew itſelf; this was by no means conſtant, but by ſtarts that laſted only a few weeks or months at a time, according to the ſtrength of thoſe impreſſions by which it was occaſionally produced. The ſeeds of this enthuſiaſm were ſown in her young mind by her father as ſoon as the ſoil was capable of receiving them, and repeated ſo inceſſantly

that ſome could not fail of taking root and bringing forth their fruits.

In the midſt of all her gaiety of heart, every melancholy ſcene, every extraordinary phenomenon, or accidental calamity occaſioned a fit of devotion; and a kind of natural averſion, if it may be ſo termed, to a medium in any thing, made this too violent to be laſting; whole days were then ſpent in acts of piety, private and public prayers with the reading religious books were her chief employment; and this was carried on with ſo much zeal that ſhe was perfectly happy in the occupations, and in reality no company was then prefer'd to her father's, whoſe whole converſation might, in

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the Apoſtle's words, have been ſaid to be in heaven. Nothing could have delighted him more; and no pains, on his part, were ſpared to confirm and ſtrengthen a diſpoſition ſo correſpondent to his own; but he had the mortification to ſee theſe fits of devotion always ſubſide when the melancholy occaſion that had produced them either ceaſed, or was by time grown familiar. I am ſorry that none of the letters written by her in theſe pious moods are to be found as they would have entertained you; ſeveral of the good old gentleman's are preſerved, one of which ſhall be incloſed in this, and will ſpeak his ſentiments better than I can deſcribe them.

Enthuſiaſm of this kind, however ſtrongly inculcated, however warmly embraced, can never be attended with ill conſequences but in weak minds; where the underſtanding is good, I am convinced that no tendency can be more advantageous to young perſons of very lively diſpoſitions: In ſuch, there is no danger of its being carried, on either hand, to a pernicious height; good ſenſe will be a ſufficient ſecurity againſt thoſe wild and frantic flights, whoſe origin may always be traced up to native folly, while a ſprightly turn prevents any danger of that unhappy deſpondency which is the product of a dull phlegmatic melancholy conſtitution. Thus ſecured from theſe dangerous extremes, I look on that ſort of enthuſi-

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aſm which in the gay ſeaſon of youth frequently recalls the attention and fixes it for a time wholly on religious ſubjects, as extremely ſerviceable toward the keeping alive thoſe principles that, as reaſon advances, form by degrees a ſolid foundation for a ſteady and rational piety.

Tho' theſe ſerious moods wore off ſo as to leave ſcarce any viſible impreſſion behind, yet, like a fire ſmothered, but not extinguiſhed, the latent power remained of being eaſily rekindled on any new occaſion: Sometimes two or three ſtarts of this uncommon devotion would happen in a year, which regularly gave place again to an equal extreme of thoughtleſs gaiety; in each of theſe humours her

her conduct was wholly guided by the prevailing diſpoſition, every action, every word partook its influence; hence aroſe the moſt ſtriking inconſiſtencies of behaviour; the pious reſolutions formed in the ſerious, vaniſhed in the gay turn of mind; the former were then unjuſtly cenſured as hypocriſy, though each was equally ſincere, and but the honeſt, and open expreſſion of thoſe ſentiments which at the time prevailed.

Very few people, enter enough into characters to form a right judgment of actions; a warm profeſſion, either of religion or friendſhip, may be contradicted by an oppoſite ſubſequent conduct without amounting to a preſumptive proof that thoſe profeſ-

ſeſſions were falſe and made with an intent to deceive; all that can from hence with certainty be deduc'd is, an unſteadineſs of temper, and too great a precipitancy in forming reſolutions and opinions, without ſtrength of mind ſufficient to perſevere in the former, or judgment enough to aſcertain the rectitude of the latter. To merit the heavy charge of hypocriſy the profeſſions and the conduct muſt at the ſame time be evidently inconſiſtent with each other, and this could never be imputed to her in any inſtance. At the age I am ſpeaking of, an affection founded on a miſtaken opinion of ſome intimate aſſociates has ſometimes occaſioned too haſty a declaration of friendſhip, this was immediately retracted on a

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diſcovery of the miſtake; but as the reaſons were given only to the perſon concerned, a conſequent ceſſation of all intimacy has often been thought, by others, to proceed from an inconſtancy of temper, though in reality it was the reſult of a uniform adherence to the ſame principle; ſhe was not ignorant of this cenſure, but could never allow herſelf to remove it by ſpeaking thoſe truths that muſt injure the character of any perſon to whom ſhe had once, however injudiciouſly, profeſſed a friendſhip. The charge of hypocriſy ſat to the full as eaſy; conſcious of equal ſincerity in both caſes, the miſtaken opinion of the world, in either, had no great weight.

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The abſence of Marcus, for whom ſhe retained a very tender affection, joined to his unexpected ſilence was ſome check to her uſual gaiety of temper, and her mother's illneſs, which ſucceeded immediately after, ſo far encreaſed the ſolemn turn as to produce a fit of devotion that laſted I believe near ſix months; during this time ſhe neither viſited or received company when it could be avoided, ſeldom went out but to church, and paid the cloſeſt attendance on Mrs. M—— who being apprehenſive that ſo unuſual a confinement would in time prove injurious to her daughter's health, often engaged her in parties of diverſion; at firſt, ſhe obeyed with reluctance, but theſe engagements be-

became gradually more agreeable 'till by ſlow degrees the uſual gaiety returned, and conſequently the continuance of them a matter of choice. The good lady foreſeeing her own diſorder might be of long duration, and having very little if any hope of recovery, ſupported her pain with a degree of chearfulneſs that would not permit a face of ſorrow in her preſence; nothing diſpleaſed her more than the appearance of grief on her account, 'twas to make her life, ſhe ſaid, a burthen to herſelf, to ſuppoſe it a ſource of uneaſineſs to her family and friends; the leaſt alteration in any part of their behavior gave her ſo much viſible diſturbance that they all endeavoured to appear equally chearful, and made no ſort of difference

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in their conduct on account of her illneſs. Yet this was afterwards made a heavy charge againſt my young friend to her father by a perſon who, in as near a relation, had nevertheleſs acted in the ſame manner. This perſon had been before made her enemy by a piece of childiſh folly, which her age ought to have excuſed; that of quitting a mourning habit for a grandfather, who had been many years ſuperannuated, a few weeks before it was left off by others in the ſame relation to him. The generality of mankind find thoſe offences the leaſt pardonable which hurt their pride, this was here the caſe, and the remembrance of an imagined affront might give ſo ſtrong a prejudice, as perhaps really to place her ac-

actions in the moſt diſadvantageous light; which in ſome meaſure may excuſe the miſrepreſentation of them. I would willingly aſſign this reaſon, for I cannot allow myſelf to believe that any perſon, who makes a ſerious profeſſion of the chriſtian religion, can ſo far indulge the deſire of revenge as deliberately to retaliate even an injury, much leſs to puniſh an affront that evidently was not intentional.

The happineſs or miſery of a whole life has ſometimes turned on a ſingle circumſtance, apparently the moſt trifling; and I know not whether this falſe ſtep might not be the original cauſe of that treatment which occaſioned my friend's imprudent mar-

marriage, by making thoſe perſons her enemies whoſe influence over her father gave them continual opportunities of croſſing her inclinations. I muſt bid you adieu for the preſent, my dear friend, Mrs. R——'s coach has juſt ſtopt at the door, her viſit will probably be too long to allow my adding more by this poſt, ſhall therefore leave you to peruſe the old gentleman's letter, and only ſubſcribe myſelf, with unalterable affection, ever moſt ſincerely

Yours,

LETTER X.

From Mr. M—— to his Daughter.

My dear

I TAKE this opportunity to remind you that right action, the exercise of reason, and the constant uniform practice of virtue are matters not only beautiful in speculation, but exceeding amiable and ornamental in life; the critical time of which is what you are now advancing to, and according to the impressions now made on your heart is like to be the happiness, or the infelicity, of your condition here and hereafter; if you would be rescued from the fatal snares

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and temptations, and avoid the rocks of youthful vanity and folly, that ſo many have ſplit upon, and utterly ruin'd themſelves by, before they have been well aware, your way is plain before you, contemplate ſeriouſly and frequently the rectitude of the divine nature; tranſcribe the moral excellencies of it in your own mind, that you may be in ſome meaſure, what God Himſelf is, *i. e.* Holy, juſt, true, and righteous altogether, then you will be conſcious of the merited eſteem of all the knowing and intelligent of your own ſpecies, I mean all the Wiſe and Good, and will be effectually convinced that the applauſe of fools is in itſelf contemptible.

A ſoul where laws, both human and divine,
In practice more than ſpeculation ſhine;
A genuine virtue of a vig'rous kind
Pure in the laſt receſſes of the mind &c.

Dryden's Juv.

Are words I know treaſured up in your memory, let the things ſignified by them, ſink into your ſpirit ſo as to form your conduct, and render you as the ſalt of the earth, and the light of the world, that God may bleſs you, and make you to become a bleſſing. I would fain convince you of the real vanity and utter inſufficiency of all ſublunary things to make you happy; ſure I am that nothing can do this, but what is as large as your wiſhes, and as laſting as your ſoul; ſee then that you walk circumſpectly, not

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as fools, but as wiſe, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be ſincere and without offence 'till the coming of the Lord; ſo ſhall you experience the difference between a filial and a ſlaviſh fear, when the thunder ſhall roar, and the lightning ſhall flaſh, as of late, an honeſt practical regard to what I have here hinted will bring you to have your delight in the Almighty, and help you to lift up your face to him with hope, and joyous expectation, and rejoice the heart of him who is

Your Father and Friend, &c.

P. S. I ſent ſome wine to the poor widow laſt week, I know not but ſhe

she may be dying; send her half a crown. I choose rather you would carry it yourself, that your eye may affect your heart, when you behold and compare her circumstances in life with your own.

End of Vol. II.